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NAUGHTY MISS BUNNY

·BY·

CLARA MULHOLLAND

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NAUGHTY MISS BUNNY.

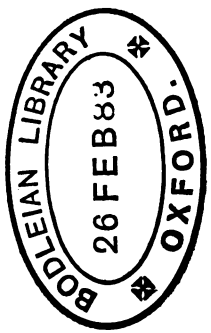
THE BUTLER SURPRISES BUNNY.

NAUGHTY MISS BUNNY:

A STORY
FOR LITTLE CHILDREN.

BY

CLARA MULHOLLAND,
Author of "The Little Bog-trotters," &c.



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NAUGHTY MISS BUNNY.

CHAPTER I.

ONLY FOR FUN.

"HOW nice!" cried Bunny. "Mama has sent for Miss Kerr, so I can do exactly as I like for a little while. I am very glad papa brought us up here, for it is so pretty and so cool, and these gardens are so lovely;" and she gazed about her at the garden and the lawn and then at the distant sea that lay just beyond them, sparkling and dancing in the sunshine. "If I had no governess," continued the little girl, "and no lessons, and no nasty nurse to say, 'Sit still, Miss Bunny,' and 'Don't make dirty your frock, Miss Bunny,' I think I should be jolly—yes, that's papa's

word, jolly. But, oh dear, big people are so happy, for they can do what they like, but *chindrel* must do everything they are told." And quite forgetting her pretty white frock and dainty sash, and the many orders she had received not on any account to soil them, she lay back comfortably upon the grass.

Bunny, whose real name was Ethel Dashwood, was six years old, and was one of the spoilt "*chindrel*," as she called children. If she had had brothers and sisters, very likely Bunny would have been kept in better order, but as she was quite alone no one could bear to correct her, and so she became very hard to manage indeed. Her papa indulged her, and thought she could do nothing wrong, whilst her mama was so delicate that she was very seldom able to look after her little girl, and left her to the care of a kind-hearted, but foolish old nurse, who allowed her to have her own way in everything and never for an instant thought of finding fault with her.

This was all very well so long as Bunny was no more than a baby, but when she came to be six years old Mrs. Dashwood suddenly

found that her little girl was much too naughty, so she resolved to make a change in the nursery, that would, she hoped, have a good effect in every way. First of all old nurse was sent away, and a trim French maid, with a quick sharp manner, was engaged to take her place.

Bunny was sorry to part with nurse, who had always been kind to her, but Sophie was so amusing, spoke such funny English, and sang such merry songs that the little girl soon ceased to fret, and became quite pleased with her new maid.

The change of nurses Bunny bore in a quiet way that surprised everyone in the house; but when her mother told her that she had arranged with a young lady to come and live with them and be her governess, the little girl burst into a passion, and stamping her foot declared she would have no one to teach her, that she would say no lessons, and that her mama was very unkind to think of such a thing.

Mrs. Dashwood was greatly shocked, and unable to understand such naughtiness, rang the bell and ordered Sophie to take the child

away, and Bunny was carried off weeping bitterly. But this fit of anger only made her mama more anxious to have some one to look after her daughter, and in a few days the governess arrived, and Bunny was set down to learn to read and write.

This was a great change for the neglected child, and had her teacher been a sensible person Bunny would doubtless have become a good little girl in time. But unfortunately the governess was very foolish, and thought it much easier to allow her pupil to have her own way than to take the trouble to make her do what was right, and so instead of doing the child good she did her harm, and Bunny became more and more naughty every day.

This was in June, and as London grew very hot and dusty, Mrs. Dashwood declared they must all go away to the country, and her husband, who wished them to have a nice holiday, went off at once and took a beautiful house at Scarborough.

Bunny was enchanted, and made up her mind to have great fun at the seaside, and as the very day before they left town, her

governess was obliged to leave in a great hurry on account of a death in her family, the little girl made up her mind that she was going to have perfect freedom to do exactly what she liked and to play every day upon the sea-beach. Sophie did not trouble her much except when she was cross, and so Bunny set off to Scarborough in very high spirits.

The house her papa had taken for them was a pretty rambling old place, standing on a height just above the sea, and surrounded by spreading trees and large gardens full of sweet-scented flowers. A most charming spot indeed, and to the little girl from hot dusty London it seemed a perfect paradise.

The first days in the country passed away very happily, and Bunny was not as wild as might have been expected by those who knew her, when one day, as she ran through the hall, she stopped in astonishment before a large trunk, and cried out to the butler, who was standing near, "Who does that belong to, Ashton? Has a visitor come to stay with us?"

"A visitor, miss? No; a new governess,

miss—she's just gone in to speak to your mama;" and he hurried away to his pantry.

"Nasty thing!" cried Bunny, stamping her foot and growing very red and angry. Just when I thought I was going to be happy all by myself! But I'll be so naughty, and so troublesome, that she'll soon go away. I'll be ten times as hard to manage as I was before. She'll not get hold of me to-night any way, and scampering off into the garden she hid herself among the trees.

But the new governess, Miss Kerr, was a very different person from the last, and resolved to do her best to make her little pupil a good well-behaved child. She was a kind, warm-hearted girl, who had a great many small brothers and sisters of her own, and she never doubted that in a short time Bunny would become as good and obedient as they were. She soon found, however, that the task was not as easy as she had fancied, and when she had been a few days at Holly Lodge she began to fear that it would be a very long time before her lectures and advice would have the smallest effect upon the wayward little child.

She had now been a whole week in charge of the girl, and she feared that Bunny would never learn to love her.

About half an hour before our story begins, Bunny and her governess had been seated on the lawn together. Mrs. Dashwood sent to ask Miss Kerr to go to her for a few moments, and that young lady had hastened into the house, leaving her little charge upon the grass with her book.

"Do not stir from here till I return, Bunny," she said; "you can go over that little lesson again, and I shall not be long."

But as time went on and she did not return the child grew restless, and feeling very tired of sitting still, began to look about to see what there was for her to do.

"Governesses are great bothers," she grumbled to herself as she rolled about on the grass. "And now as Miss Kerr does not seem to be coming back, I think I will have a climb up that tree—it looks so easy I'm sure I could go up ever so high. There's nobody looking, so I'll just see if I can go right away up—as high as that little bird up there."

Bunny was very quick in her movements, and a minute later her white frock and blue sash were fluttering about among the leaves and branches of a fine old tree that grew in the middle of the lawn.

"Oh, dear! How lovely it would be to be a bird—cheep, cheep! If I only had wings I should just feel like one this minute, perched up so high," she said with a merry laugh, as she jumped and wriggled about on the branch.

But she quite forgot that the nursery window overlooked the lawn, and that Sophie was sure to be sitting there at her work. In a moment, however, this fact was recalled to her mind by the sound of a wild shriek from the terrified maid.

"Mademoiselle! Miss Bunny, you want to kill yourself, or tear your sweet frock. Ah! naughty child, get down this instants, or I will tell monsieur your papa."

This was the one threat that had any power to move Miss Bunny, so down she scrambled and ran away as fast as she could over the grass.

There was still no sign of Miss Kerr, so the child wandered about, wondering what was

keeping her governess, and wishing she had something to do, when all at once her eyes fell on a beautiful rose-tree, almost weighed down with the quantity of its flowers, and she flew at it in delight and began to pull off the lovely blossoms and pin one of them into the front of her frock. But like most foolish children she broke them off so short that there was no stalk left with which to fasten them, and so the poor rose fell upon the ground, and the little girl impatiently snatched at another and dragged it ruthlessly from the branch. This went on for some time, and would probably have gone on until not a flower remained upon the bush, had not Sophie again made herself heard from the nursery window.

"Miss Bunny, how can you derange the beautiful roses?" she cried indignantly. "There will be not one left to give to your papa when he comes home, and you know he loves those sweet flowers so much."

"Oh, I am so sorry," cried Bunny. "But there are some dear little buds, and I will just leave them for papa. Who knows perhaps they may be roses by to-morrow even-

ing!" and away she flitted like a white-winged butterfly in search of some other sweet flowers that she might make her own, without fear of further interruption from sharp-tongued Sophie.

At last, when she had such a large bouquet that her little hands could scarcely hold it, she wearied of her occupation, and stepping softly to the drawing-room window, she peeped in just to see what Miss Kerr and her mama could be doing that kept them shut up there for so long together.

"I'll take mama these flowers," she said to herself, "and I am sure they will make her headache better. I'll just tap gently at the window and Miss Kerr will let me in, and I'll be so good and quiet that mama will not mind me being with her while she talks."

Bunny waited for some minutes, hoping to be admitted to the room, but no notice was taken of her knocking—for the ladies were too much absorbed in their own affairs to trouble themselves about her.

Mrs. Dashwood lay on the sofa, and her face had a flushed anxious expression, as she

listened to Miss Kerr, who was seated on a stool by her side, and seemed to be talking very earnestly, but her voice was low, and as the window was shut Bunny could not hear a word she said.

"Oh dear, what a lot Miss Kerr has got to say!" cried the little girl impatiently. "She seems as if she had forgotten all about me. I am tired of being out here all alone, so I'll just run in and play with my dollies."

Now the nearest way into the house was up a flight of steps and in by the dining-room window, which was like a large glass door, and always lay open in the most tempting manner possible.

So up these steps went Miss Bunny, her hands full of flowers and her mind bent on mischief, if she could only meet with anything to do that would amuse her and give her some fun.

The room into which she stepped was a very pretty one. It was very nearly round, with many high windows looking out upon the pleasant grounds and blue sparkling sea. Upon the walls were pictures of fine thoroughbred horses, some of them with their little

foals beside them, others with a surly-looking old dog or a tiny kitten, their favourite stable companion and friend. Bunny loved these pictures and had given the horses pet names of her own, by which she insisted on calling them, although their own well-known names were printed under them, for they were all horses that had won a great number of races during their lives, and so had become celebrated.

The round table in the middle of the room was laid ready for dinner, and looked very inviting with its prettily arranged flowers, handsome silver, and shining glass.

"Dear me, how nice it all looks!" said Bunny, as she marched round the table on tip-toe. "One, two, three, four places. Why, it must be for company. Well, I hope there will be somebody nice to talk to me. I must get Sophie to put on my pretty new frock. But oh, dear, what fun it would be just to put a tiny, little drop of water into every glass! Wouldn't old Ashton wonder—just when he thinks everything is nice for dinner? I will! I'll do it! It will be such fun! Oh, I'd like to see his face; won't he be horribly angry?"

Throwing her flowers on the floor, Bunny sprang to the side-board, and seizing a water-jug she climbed up on each chair in turn and poured a few drops of water into every glass all round the dinner-table.

Just as she came to the last wine-glass and held the jug ready to let the water fall into it, the door opened suddenly and the solemn-looking old butler entered the room.

"Miss Bunny!" he exclaimed, and he looked so stern and angry that the little girl felt frightened, and dropping the jug, scrambled off the chair, seized her flowers, and ran out of his sight as fast as she could.

"I only did it for fun, Ashton," she called back from the door. "It is clean water, so it won't do any harm."

"Harm, indeed!" grumbled Ashton; "just as I thought I had everything done until dinner time. Now I must begin and rub up all this glass again;" and he began at once to remove the glasses from the table. "Little himp that she is, that Miss Bunny! A perfect himp, and if I had the governessing of her for sometime I'd—I'd—bah! there's that bell again! Some folks is in a mighty hurry,"

and full of anger and indignation against the little girl whom he could not punish for her naughty trick, Ashton hurried to the hall door, longing for something upon which he could vent his wrath.

Bunny was skipping merrily in the hall, and the pretty roses that she had gathered with so much pleasure lay scattered on the ground. This sight did not tend to put the butler in a better temper, but he made no remark, and passing by the little girl without a word he opened the hall door with a jerk. A poor boy with a thin pinched face stood upon the step.

"If you please, sir, will you give me a bit of bread, for I am very hungry?" he said in an imploring voice, as he gazed up into the butler's face.

"There's nothing for you. How dare you come here with your wretched lies?" cried Ashton fiercely, and he shut the door with a bang.

"That's not true, Ashton," cried Bunny, darting forward and opening the door again. "Wait, little boy, and I will get you something!" and before the astonished butler

knew where he was, she had rushed into the dining-room, and came back carrying a large loaf and a pat of butter that she had found upon the side-board.

"You must not give that away, Miss Bunny," cried the man; "that is in my charge, and I cannot allow you to give it to a beggar;" and he tried to drag the bread from her hands.

"You nasty man! I will give it to him if I like," she screamed. "My papa always lets me do what I like, and you are only a servant—and I will give it;" and she struggled to get away from him. "I only put the water in your glasses for fun—but I'm very glad I did it—and I wish I had put dirty water in—and I wish—let me go—I'll tell papa, and he'll be very angry and—"

"Bunny," said a soft reproachful voice, "my dear child, what is the matter?" and Miss Kerr laid her hand gently upon the little girl's shoulder.

"That nasty Ashton won't let me give this loaf to a poor boy who is there begging," cried Bunny; "he's very hungry and I want—"

"Ashton is quite right, Bunny," said Miss

Kerr gently; "give him back the loaf, dear. It is not yours, so you have no right to give it away. Have you no money of your own to give the boy?"

"No, I have not," cried Bunny bursting into tears, "and I am sure papa would not mind my giving the loaf away—he never does. Ashton's a nasty, cross old thing;" and she flung the loaf on the floor.

"Ashton is only doing his duty, Bunny, and you must not speak in that way."

"Well, I wish he wouldn't do his duty then," sobbed the little girl; "it's a great shame of him to do his duty, when I tell him not."

"Come, now, dear, dry your eyes and give this to the poor boy," said Miss Kerr kindly; "see, I will lend you threepence to give to him, and when your papa gives you some pocket-money you can repay me. The boy will like the money better than the bread, I daresay, and you will feel that you are giving something that is really your own."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" cried Bunny with delight, her tears drying up in an instant. "You are good! You are kind!" and throw-

ing her arms round Miss Kerr's neck she kissed her over and over again; then seizing the pennies she flew to the door, and handing them to the boy said in a subdued voice: "Here, boy, a good lady gave me these pennies for you. I am a greedy little girl and spend all my own money on sweets, but I'll save up and pay Miss Kerr back very soon."

"That is enough, Bunny," said the governess, taking the child by the hand. "I have something to tell you, dear, so come with me now."

"Very well, I will come," answered Bunny quite meekly, and shutting the door, she followed Miss Kerr down the hall.

CHAPTER II.

PLEASANT NEWS FOR BUNNY.

"AND now, Bunny," said Miss Kerr, as she led the little girl into the library and took her on her knee, "I am afraid you have been a very naughty child. I do not like to scold you, you know, but when children are told to stay in one place they should do so, and not run about all over the house in the way you seem to have been doing."

"But you were so long away," replied Bunny, "and I was tired sitting there all by myself. Sophie kept screaming at me not to touch the flowers, so I had nothing to do."

"And what about the lesson? Did you learn that?"

"No, I didn't, it was so stupid," said

Bunny, "I got quite tired of it, and all the letters went wrong, so I thought I would go to the nursery and play with my toys, and then when I went into the dining-room there was nobody there, and I thought it would be great fun to tease old Ashton, so I jumped on the chairs and poured water into all the glasses, and he was so angry; and oh it was fun to see his face when he cried out, 'Miss Bunny!'" and carried away with delight at the recollection of her naughty trick, the little girl clapped her hands and laughed long and merrily.

"But, my dear child, do you not know that that was extremely naughty conduct?" said Miss Kerr gravely. "It is very wicked to make anyone angry, and it was very unkind of you to play such a trick upon Ashton. How would you like if he were to spoil your toys or break your dolls for you?"

"Oh, I shouldn't like it at all," answered Bunny; "I'd be awfully cross, and I'd get papa to send him away. That would be a good way to punish him, I know."

"Well, Bunny, you think you could punish him but he has no way of punishing you,

so you should always be very careful not to annoy or trouble him. Besides, my child, we should never do anything to other people that we know we would not like them to do to us. God wishes us to be good and kind to everyone about us, remember, and to be unkind is to disobey Him."

"Oh, then, I'm very sorry that I was so naughty," cried Bunny, "for Sophie told me this morning that God has been good and kind to me always, for she says He gave me all the nice things I have, and my papa and mama, so I should not like to vex Him when He has been so kind to me."

"If my little Bunny will just remember that, whenever she feels inclined to be naughty she will soon find it easy to be good, and she will be a much happier child, for then she will know that she is pleasing God who has been good to her."

"Oh, I will try, dear Miss Kerr, indeed I will," said the little girl; "I'll be good and kind to God, and you, and papa, and mama, because you are all so good to me;" and she laid her soft cheek against Miss Kerr's face.

"That is right, darling," said the governess

with a smile; "and now that I have given you a little lecture, and you have promised to be good, I have a piece of news to tell you that will, I am sure, give you great pleasure;" and she smoothed the child's fair hair with her hand.

"Good news! Oh, dear Miss Kerr, do tell me what it is," cried the little girl eagerly.

"Well, I have been having a long talk with your mama, Bunny, and—"

"Oh, yes, I know that. I saw you talk, talk, talk, only I couldn't hear what you were saying, because the window was shut."

"No, I suppose not, dear, but listen. Your mama says you have an uncle in India who has a little son of seven years old—"

"Oh, I know that, Miss Kerr! Why, that's no news! Of course I know about Uncle Jim and Cousin Mervyn. I never saw them though, but still I know they are in India, an awfully hot place it is, Sophie says."

"Yes, so it is. But would you like to see this Cousin Mervyn, do you think?"

"Oh, I'd just love to see him—but is he black? Sophie says the people in those countries are black. Oh, I shouldn't like a black

cousin, Miss Kerr, indeed I should not," cried Bunny in a piteous voice.

"You little goose, he's not black at all," cried Miss Kerr, laughing at the little girl's look of consternation; "I have never seen him, but his papa is supposed to be like your mama, so I daresay he will have fair hair, blue eyes, and pink cheeks something very like your own."

"Oh, I'm glad he is like that, for indeed I could not bear a black cousin. Once I had a black doll given to me for a present, and I screamed and screamed till nurse put it away out of the nursery."

"It is certainly very lucky that your cousin is not black, for it would never do to scream at him, would it?" said Miss Kerr, "for he has arrived in London and is coming here with your papa to-morrow evening."

"Oh, I am glad! Oh, I am glad!" sang Bunny, dancing round the room on the points of her toes. "What fun it will be to have a little cousin to play with! Will he stay long, Miss Kerr?"

"Yes, a long time, Bunny," answered the governess. "It is too hot in India for him

to stay there any longer—indeed they think he has stayed there too long already, and your mama has promised to take care of him until he is old enough to go to school."

"Oh, that will be a nice long visit," said the little girl; "he'll be staying with us just as if it was home, and he was my own brother."

"Yes, dear, just so. He will be like your brother, I am sure; and he is to have his lessons with you I am to teach you both."

"Yes, and I'll lend him my pony and I'll let him play with my kittens. And oh, Miss Kerr, I'll give him tea out of my own little tea-set; and we'll have such fun."

"Yes, dear, it will be very nice, and I hope that little Bunny will be a good child and not make her cousin naughty and teach him mischievous tricks."

"Oh, I'll be good, indeed, dear Miss Kerr. I won't want to be naughty so much when I have someone to play with, for it's always when I feel lonely that I want to play tricks on people."

"Is that so really, you poor mite? Well, you will not be lonely any more, Bunny, and

I hope you will try hard and learn to read soon. When children can read they do not want a companion so much, because they can read pretty stories about other children and so amuse themselves for hours together."

"Oh, I don't want to read stories one bit," said Bunny with a pout. "Sophie and mama read lots of stories to me, so it doesn't matter whether I can read them for myself or not."

"And what will you do when you grow up, Bunny? Don't you think you would feel very much ashamed if you could not read when you had grown to be a tall lady?"

"Oh, no one would ever know, for I am sure people never ask grown-up ladies if they can read. Do they, now? No one ever asks you or mama if you know how to read."

"No, people never ask us if we can read, certainly, Bunny," answered Miss Kerr laughing, "but they would soon find out if we did not, I can tell you. People who cannot read seldom learn those things that everyone should know, and so they are ignorant and stupid. Surely you would not like Mervyn to beat you at his lessons, would you?"

"Oh, but he's older than me," said Bunny, "and, of course, he knows a great deal more than me, and——"

"Than *I*, Bunny, say he is older than *I* am," corrected Miss Kerr. "Yes, he is older, but I do not think he knows more than you do. His papa says he has never been taught anything but his letters, and he can hardly speak English."

"Oh, dear! Does he only speak French then?" said Bunny with a look of alarm.

"No, Hindustanee. That is the Indian language, you know, and as he always had a native nurse he does not know English very perfectly. But we will soon teach him, won't we, dear?"

"Oh, yes, it will be fun, and I'll try very hard to learn to read well before he does! It will be nice to have a cousin, won't it? I wonder what he's like. But I'm sure he'll be nice. I know he will. Don't you think he'll be nice, Miss Kerr?"

"Yes, dear, I think it is very likely, but you will know all about him to-morrow."

"Oh, I wish to-morrow would come, quick, quick!" cried Bunny; "the days and the

hours go over so slowly, and I do want to see that little Indian."

"Poor little boy! I daresay he will be very tired and shy when he arrives. It is a sad thing to leave father and friends and come among strangers, Bunny," said Miss Kerr, and there were tears in her eyes as she gazed out over the garden.

"Dear Miss Kerr, why should you feel sorry for Mervyn? I'm so glad that he is coming here," said Bunny softly, and she put her little hand into Miss Kerr's. "Why should you cry for him? We will be very kind to him, you and I, and papa and mama."

"Yes, darling, of course," answered Miss Kerr stroking the little hand. "But I was not thinking of Mervyn, but of someone I know, who had to leave her dear home, her father and mother, and brothers and sisters, to go be governess to a wild little girl, who did not care to learn her lessons and did not love her at all."

"Why, that's like me and you! But I do love you; oh, I do love you!" cried the child, and she flung her arms round Miss Kerr's

neck. "You are so good and kind, and I am sorry you had to leave your little brothers and sisters, and I won't be wild, and I'll love you very much."

"If you do, Bunny, you will make me very happy, and I think you will soon be a very good little girl," and Miss Kerr kissed the eager face over and over again. "But run away now and get ready for tea. I have some letters to write for the post, and I shall just have time if you run off at once."

"Very well," said Bunny jumping off Miss Kerr's knee. "I must go to tell Sophie the news." And away she ran, calling, "Sophie, Sophie," as she went up the stairs.

"She has a good little heart, and will become a fine character in time, if she is properly managed," said Miss Kerr to herself as the child left the room. "But she has been terribly spoilt and neglected. If the boy from India is as great a pickle as Miss Bunny, I shall have my hands very full indeed," and with something between a sigh and a laugh, Miss Kerr seated herself at the table and began to write her letters.

CHAPTER III.

BUNNY GETS UP EARLY.

FOR a long time after she went to bed that night, Bunny could not go to sleep, and lay tossing about from side to side, wishing over and over again that it was morning, that she might get up and put all her toys and books in order, so that they should look as nice as possible when she came to show them to the new cousin.

At last she dropped off into a sound sleep, and did not wake again until the sun was shining brightly into her room. She jumped up and looked about to see if Sophie had gone to get her bath ready. But the maid lay fast asleep in her bed at the other side of the room, and poor Bunny felt sure she would not get up for a very long time yet.

She felt ready to cry at the thoughts of lying there for so long doing nothing, whilst the sun was shining so brightly over the sea and dancing so merrily up and down the nursery walls. Suddenly, however, a happy idea presented itself to her mind, and she sprang out of her crib with a soft well-pleased little laugh.

"It will be such fun," she whispered to herself, "and Sophie will get such a start when she sees the crib empty! But I must go about very gently or she might wake up and send me back to bed."

So the little girl slipped very quietly about the room, and struggled bravely with buttons and tapes, as she did her best to dress herself without the assistance of her maid.

"They're all upside down and tied in big knots," she said ruefully, "but Sophie will just have to do them all over again when she gets up. Oh, dear, where are my boots, I wonder? I can't see them anywhere about. Well, I must go out in these, I suppose;" and sitting down on the floor she put on a pair of dainty Queen Anne shoes, with satin bows and steel stars, that she had worn the even-

ing before when she went down to the drawing-room to see her mama.

At this moment Sophie turned round with a loud snore, and Bunny gave a start of alarm, as she looked quickly towards the bed. If Sophie awoke and saw what she was doing, all her fun would surely be spoiled, and she would be sent back to her crib in disgrace.

Very cautiously then she got up off the floor, seized her hat that lay on the chest of drawers, and opening the door as softly as possible, flew along the corridor and away down the stairs.

Not a servant was to be seen about, for it was not yet seven o'clock, and so Bunny passed on without any interruption into the dining-room, and stood on tiptoe at the sideboard looking anxiously to see if there was anything there for her to eat. But there was not even a crust to be seen.

"Nasty old Ashton!" she cried, "he might have left a few pieces of bread for me; but he wouldn't, I'm sure, even if he had known I was coming. I must get something for my dear pony, now that I am up, so I'll go

off to the larder and see what I can find there."

So away went Bunny in high glee at her clever thought; but when she arrived at the larder door she found it locked, and she was about to turn away sad and disappointed when a sudden jingling of keys was heard in the passage, the kitchen door opened, and Mrs. Brown, the cook, appeared upon the scene.

"Miss Bunny, dear, what brings you here at such an hour? And law but you are dressed queer! But, indeed, them Frenchies are little good with their new-fangled ways. It's nurse that used to dress you smart, deary, and as for Sophie, she beats all;" and the good woman held up her hands in dismay at the child's untidy appearance.

"Oh, Sophie didn't dress me at all!" cried Bunny. "She doesn't even know I'm up, for she's fast asleep. But I was so tired lying there listening to Sophie snoring that I thought I would get up and go out. I want to take my pony a piece of bread, so please give me some for him and some for myself, Mrs. Brown, for I'm very hungry."

"Bless your heart, of course I will," cried the good-natured woman, as she unlocked the door, and cutting two large slices of bread and butter, handed them to the little girl.

"Oh, thank you," said Bunny; "Frisk will like this, I am sure. Good morning, Mrs. Brown, and mind you don't tell Sophie where I am, if she comes to look for me."

"Don't be afraid, deary, I won't give her any news of you. I don't admire her and her stuck-up French airs, so she won't get much out of me."

But Bunny did not wait to hear the end of the good woman's speech against poor Sophie; she had got all she wanted, so away she ran to pay her morning visit to her little pony.

When Frisk heard the stable door opening and a footstep approaching his stall, he whisked his tail and twisted his head as well as he could, to see who was coming to visit him at such an early hour. And when he found it was his little mistress, and heard her voice at his ear he neighed with delight, and rubbed his velvety nose up and down her frock.

"Dear old Frisk," she cried, patting his neck, "there's a little cousin coming all the way from India to stay with us. Sophie is not glad, but I am, and Miss Kerr is, and you must be glad too, old man. And he's not black at all, Frisk, oh, no, and it is very, very silly of you to think so, sir. You must be good to him, dear little pony, and give him nice rides, and then he'll love you, just as I do, and we'll all be friends together. So now eat this, little Frisk," she continued, and breaking off a piece of the bread, she held it up to the pony's nose.

But suddenly Bunny gave a little shriek, and drew her hand quickly away; for without intending it, Frisk had actually bitten his kind little mistress. The bread she offered him was so small, and his mouth was so big, that the child's fingers got rather far in among his teeth, and when Frisk's white grinders came down upon the dainty offered him, they met rather sharply upon poor Bunny's thumb. The skin was slightly cut, and as a little stream of blood ran down her finger the child grew frightened and began to cry.

"Oh, Frisk, Frisk, why did you bite? I never thought you would do such a thing," she cried reproachfully. "I never, never knew you do such a thing before;" and sinking down on the straw by his side, she tried to stop the blood by rolling her finger tightly up in the corner of her pinafore. "Just when I wanted to tell the new cousin that you were a good, kind pony, you go and bite me —oh dear, oh dear, I am very sorry, Frisk, I am indeed."

But in spite of the little girl's sorrowful lecture, Frisk did not in the least know that he had done anything wrong, and poking his soft nose into Bunny's lap, he carried off the remaining piece of bread and ate it with much relish.

"You artful old thing," cried Bunny, delighted with his cleverness, and smiling through her tears, "if you hadn't bit me I'd have said you were the best and dearest little pony alive;" and forgetting her anger at him for hurting her, she jumped up and patted and kissed his soft silky nose.

"Where is Mademoiselle Bunny? Ah! that child will be the death of me. Jean,

have you seen Mees Bunny anywhere about?" cried Sophie, just outside the stable door; and the little girl knew that her hour was come and that she was going to get a good scolding.

"Oh, Miss Bunny is in there, talking to Frisk, Mamzelle Sophie," answered the groom.

"Little naughty one! Ah, these English children are so dreadful!" cried Sophie, and in a moment Bunny was dragged out from her seat on the straw and carried away to the nursery.

"Oh!" she screamed as soon as they were inside the door, "what is that I see on your dress, mademoiselle? Blood, I declare! Oh, what will your mama say? She will send away that beast of a pony I am sure, and then you will not make such early walks to the stable."

"Oh, Sophie, Sophie, don't tell! don't tell!" cried Bunny, "Frisk did not mean to hurt me I am sure, and it's nearly well now. Look, it has stopped bleeding already, so don't tell mama, pray don't," and the little girl raised her eyes full of tears to the maid's face.

"Well, I won't tell if you will promise me never to slip out of your bed and away out of the house again as you have done just now."

"Oh, I never will, I never will, Sophie!" cried Bunny, "but do say you won't tell. I couldn't bear to see Frisk sent away."

"Well, well, don't cry any more," said Sophie good-naturedly. "Be a good enfant, and I will say not anything about it."

"Oh! you dear, darling Sophie, I'll be so good, so good!" cried the little girl, "I'll be so good that you'll never have to scold me any more."

"Ma foi, what a change that will be!" cried Sophie, "if you get so good as all that I will send for the doctor."

"For the doctor!" exclaimed Bunny in surprise. "Why would you send for him?"

"Good gracious, mademoiselle, because I will surely think you are ill if you get to be an angel like that; but I am very certain I shall have to scold you many times before this evening comes."

"Very likely, Sophie, but still I'm good now," said Bunny with a merry little laugh,

and as the maid gave the last touch to her hair, the last pull to her sash, she ran out of the nursery and away to her mama with whom she always had her breakfast.

Bunny was in a wild state of excitement all that day, and Sophie and Miss Kerr found it very hard to keep her in order and prevent her disturbing her mama, who was not well, and could not bear much noise.

"Oh, dear, how long the day is! How long the day is!" she cried over and over again. "I don't think evening will ever come, Miss Kerr, I don't, indeed."

"It will come fast enough, Bunny dear, if you will only have patience. Try and forget that you are expecting anything to happen."

"I wish I could! I wish I could! But I do so wish to see what Mervyn is like."

"You impatient little goose, do try and think of something else and time will go over much faster. But I tell you what, Bun," said Miss Kerr, when they had finished their early dinner, "we will go and take a good run on the sands and that will pass the afternoon very nicely for us."

"But they might come when we are away, and that would be dreadful."

"No, they won't, because they can't," said Miss Kerr with a smile. "The train does not come in until seven, and it is only three now, so you see we have plenty of time for a nice walk."

CHAPTER IV.

BUNNY GETS A FRIGHT.

"DO be quick, Sophie," cried Bunny as she rushed into the nursery after her walk upon the sands, "Miss Kerr says it is half-past five, and papa and Mervyn will be here at seven, so do be quick and dress me as fast as ever you can, for I want to be down in the hall, ready to jump out at them the minute they come to the door."

"Indeed," said Sophie without moving from her chair at the window. "What haste we are in, certainly. But you may just keep still, Miss Bunny, for I am not going to touch you for one half hour. What is the use for me to dress you now, when long before seven you would be so black as a sweep again, I know.'

"Oh, what a bother!" cried Bunny, stamping her foot and flinging her pretty white hat upon the floor. "You are a nasty thing, and I wish you had not come to be my maid at all, for you never do anything I ask you to do. I wish dear old nurse was back with me again, she used to be so nice, and always did whatever I wanted."

"Old nurse was an old silly," answered Sophie, stitching away at her work. "She neg-lect you and make you so naughty, and it is for me to keep you in order and make you good."

"Well, I won't be kept in order, and I won't be made good—not one bit," cried Bunny bursting into tears. "It's very unkind of you not to dress me in time to see my papa, and he'll be very angry with you."

"Come, Miss Bunny, don't be a silly baby," said Sophie, "I'll dress you soon enough, do not fear that. You had so much best go and make tidy that doll's house, for the little cousin will be ashamed to see it in so much of disorder."

"I don't want to tidy my doll's house, and I don't care whether Mervyn likes it or

BUNNY WELCOMES HER FATHER.

not, not a bit!" said Bunny, and taking off one little glove she threw it into the very furthest corner of the room, and then rolling the other into a ball she threw it at Sophie's head as she sat bending over her work.

But the maid did not take the slightest notice of the young lady, and without another word went quietly on with her sewing.

When Bunny saw that Sophie was really determined not to dress her for some time, she sat down on the floor in silence, and leaning her head up against the side of her crib, kicked about for some minutes in a very ill-tempered way indeed. After a while she grew tired of this conduct, which to her great surprise did not seem to make Sophie the least bit angry, and not knowing what to do with herself she sat staring about the room with a very sulky expression on her little face.

But by degrees the tears dried up, the cross look disappeared, and jumping suddenly to her feet, she trotted off to the other end of the room. Pulling open the wide door of the doll's house, she set to work very industriously to put it in order.

She brushed the carpets, dusted the chairs, shook out the dolls' dresses and set them out in the drawing-room as if they were waiting to receive their visitors.

"Now it's tidy, Sophie," she cried with a bright little smile. "Mervyn will think it a very nice doll's house. Won't he?"

"Yes, my dear enfant, I am sure he will," said Sophie kindly, "and now as you have been good and quiet for so long, I will begin to dress you if you like."

"Oh, that is a dear good Sophie. I am so afraid that I shall not be ready when papa comes."

"You will be ready, never fear," said Sophie, and taking off the child's frock, she began to wash her face and hands.

"You hurt, Sophie, you hurt," cried Bunny pettishly, as the maid combed out her long fair hair.

"Bah, no I don't hurt you, mademoiselle, except when you pull your head aside. But in truth it is hard to comb your hair properly when you move and fidget about. You are very difficult to manage to-day."

"I tell you, you do hurt me—you pull as

hard as anything," cried Bunny growing very red.

"Very well, miss, if you are in such humour," cried Sophie, "you may just stand there till you get back to your temper again. I'm going into the next room to get your frock, and I hope that when I come back you will be quiet and let me dress your hair like a little lady," and the maid flounced out of the nursery, leaving Bunny standing before the glass in her short white petticoat, with one shoe off and the other on, her hair hanging in disorder about her shoulders, and her face puckered up in dismay at Sophie's sudden and unexpected departure.

"Oh, why was I so cross about my hair?" she cried. "Papa and Mervyn will be here directly, and just look at the state I am in. What shall I do? What shall I do? Sophie, I'll be good. Do come back, and get me ready to go down."

But Sophie did not answer, nor did she return, and poor Bunny sat down on the edge of her crib, and in spite of all the efforts she made to keep them back, the big tears rolled slowly down her cheeks.

Suddenly the sound of wheels was heard upon the gravel below, and brushing away her tears, the little girl started to her feet and ran over to the window.

A cab covered with luggage was coming in at the big gate, and in a minute she saw her papa nodding gaily up to his little with a bright well-pleased dear face.

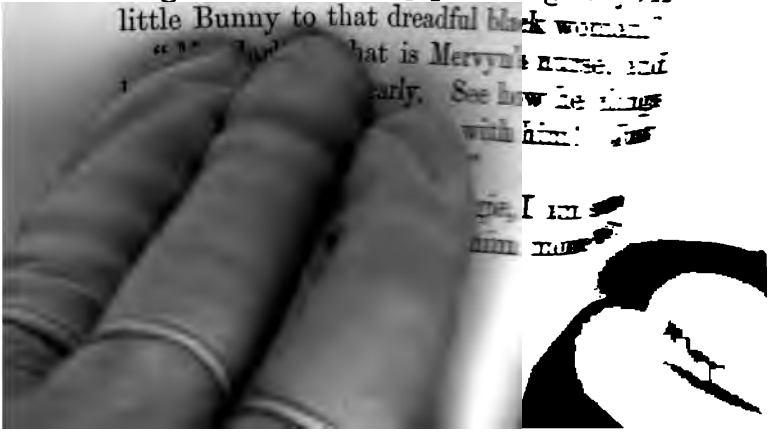
Without a moment state she was in, or of little boy from India m such a condition, Bunny and with a joyful cry of own dear papa," she rushe sery and away down the sta.

"My little darling! My sw exclaimed Mr. Dashwood, as t looking figure came running a and jumped into his arms. "Wh did you come out of the nursery were dressed?" he said, as he smoo the ruffled hair and kissed the hot the excited child. "You are in a state to receive visitors, Bunny dear, am afraid cousin Mervyn will be shock

my wild girl, for he is a very tidy little man, I can tell you. Mervyn, this is your cousin Ethel, commonly called Bunny, I hope you will be very good friends," and he put out his hand to a pale gentle-looking boy of about seven years old, who was clinging shyly to the skirts of an Indian Ayah, as though afraid to let her go from beside him for an instant.

When Bunny raised her head from her papa's shoulder to look at her new cousin, her eyes suddenly lighted upon the grinning black face of the strange foreign-looking woman, and with one wild yell of terror she turned away, and buried her little face in her father's coat.

"Oh, send that dreadful thing away!" she cried, "I'm not half so naughty as I used to be! And I have promised Miss Kerr to be so good! Oh, papa, papa, don't give your little Bunny to that dreadful black woman!"



vously than ever. "Sophie always tells me a bogie will come for me if I am naughty, and I was naughty just now because Sophie pulled my hair, and I was cross, and cried and stamped my foot and—"

"My poor foolish little girl, she is not a bogie, but a good kind woman—her face is black, but she can't help that. It was very wrong of Sophie to frighten you about bogies, very wrong—there is no such thing in the world.

"Ah, monsieur, monsieur, I'm so sorry Meess Bunny has been so naughty to run down to you in such a state," cried Sophie running into the hall with a very angry look on her face. "I just left her for a minute to get her frock, and when I came back she was gone."

"Oh, Sophie, Sophie, don't scold me, please," cried Bunny, "I'll go back to the nursery, and let you dress me now. Oh, take me away quick, for if I see that dreadful face, I shall scream again, I know I shall;" and with one little hand over her eyes that she might not see the terrible creature again, Bunny flung herself into Sophie's arms and

was carried off upstairs to have her toilet completed for dinner.

"Poor little monkey!" said Mr. Dashwood laughing, "I never thought she would be so easily frightened. "Ashton, take the nurse down to the housekeeper's room, and tell the servants to look after her, and give her her dinner. Come, Mervyn, my little man, I want to take you to see your aunt."

"Yes, uncle," answered the little boy in a shy nervous voice, and looking up into the Ayah's face to see what she wished him to do.

"Go at once," she said in Hindustanee, and then Mervyn went up to his uncle, and putting his little hand into his, allowed him to lead him down the passage to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER V.

THE LITTLE INDIAN.

MRS. DASHWOOD lay on the sofa in the drawing-room, and Miss Kerr sat beside her reading aloud.

The two children, Bunny and Mervyn, were seated side by side upon a large white woolly rug in the bow-window, and they whispered together in very low tones lest they should disturb the ladies by their noise.

Bunny was nursing a pretty black kitten, with a red ribbon round its neck, whilst Mervyn sat with his little hands clasped over his knees, looking out at the blue sparkling sea, with a well-pleased expression on his thin pale face.

"What a lovely cool place England is!" he whispered; "it feels so comfortable and

nice here, and that sea is so beautiful to look at."

"Yes, to look at," answered Bunny, nodding her head; "but, oh! Mervyn, wouldn't you feel afraid to go into it, and have your face stuck right under the water, and held there till you had no breath, and—"

"Oh, that would be horrible!" cried Mervyn with a frightened look; "my papa would be angry if I were put into the sea in that way. Oh! I will write and tell him if—"

"Well, I know he wrote to say that bathing would be very good for you," said Bunny, "and mama told Miss Kerr this very morning she was sure it would be. But I tell you, Mervyn, it's only Sophie that is so rough and nasty. One day I went to bathe with Miss Kerr, and it was lovely! She told me when she was going to dip me, and she let me play at the edge, and I took dolly in and I dipped her, and it was such fun."

"Well, then, I will ask Miss Kerr always to bathe me," replied Mervyn; "I should die, I am sure, if I were pushed under the water and could not get my breath."

"Oh! I was often and often pushed down that way by Sophie, and I didn't die at all; but I kicked and screamed most dreadfully," cried Bunny; "but then, mama says I am very strong, and Sophie said last night that you were a misserble creature, so thin and white."

"Sophie is very rude!" exclaimed Mervyn with a slight flush; "I am not a miserable creature; I can't help being white; everyone is in India, because it's so hot."

"That is funny!" cried the little girl, "for Sophie said all Indians were black, and I thought you would have a little black face like Pussy here, only Miss Kerr told me you would be as white as me; but you're whiter, much whiter," and she laid her small plump pink hand on Mervyn's thin white one.

"I don't like your Sophie," cried Mervyn impatiently; "she talks in such a queer way, and she's not half so nice as my dear old Indian nurse. I do wish she had been able to stay in England with me."

"Oh, I think she was a horrid fright!" cried Bunny, "with her nasty black face and her dreadful flappy wild dress, and I'm

sure nobody could understand a word she said."

"I could," said Mervyn with a sigh, "and I liked talking Hindustanee much better than English."

"But it sounds so silly!" cried Bunny; "I think it's a great pity people shouldn't always speak English everywhere, for that would be so plain and easy."

"Well, I would much rather everyone would speak Hindustanee, for that would be much nicer."

"Oh, dear! I don't think so," said Bunny; "and I think you speak English very well."

"Do you?" said Mervyn, smiling; "papa did not; and do you know, I can't always think of the right words for things."

"Oh! just ask me and I will tell you," replied Bunny jauntily, "for I never have to think for my words at all."

"Bunny, dear," said Mrs. Dashwood from her sofa, "I think you have nursed that kitten quite long enough; the poor little thing looks very tired. Put it into its basket like a good child."

"Very well, mama," answered Bunny, and,

jumping up, she ran over to a corner of the room where stood a pretty round basket, which was always used as a snug bed for Miss Puss.

Bunny dropped her pet gently in upon the soft cushion, and after much stroking and tucking up, she stole away on tip-toe to her mother's side.

But Pussy was in a playful mood, and as soon as the little girl's back was turned she sprang lightly out of her bed and went scampering gaily round the room.

"Naughty, naughty puss!" cried Bunny laughing, and off she went in pursuit of the runaway.

"Bunny, dear Bunny, I can't bear that noise," cried Mrs. Dashwood, as her little daughter tumbled over a footstool and knocked down a chair. "I can't bear it indeed, dear child, so I think you had better go out. Sophie will take you for a walk, as I want Miss Kerr to read to me."

"Oh, mama! I like Miss Kerr much better than Sophie," cried Bunny, "and so does Mervyn. Do let Miss Kerr come."

"But, Bunny, dear," said Miss Kerr, "you

would not like poor mama to have no one to read to her, would you? It is so dull for her all day on the sofa by herself. You would not ask me to leave her, would you?"

"Oh! no, no, dear, darling mama, I will not ask Miss Kerr to come, not for a minute!" cried Bunny as, kneeling beside the sofa, she threw her arms round her mother's neck and kissed her vehemently. "I could not bear to think of you being lonely, mamey dear. But do let us stay here now, and go out in the afternoon with Miss Kerr. Mervyn can't bear Sophie."

"I am sorry for that, my little man," said Mrs. Dashwood, drawing the boy towards her; "Sophie is sharp and quick, but she is very good-natured, I think, so I hope you will try and like her."

Oh! yes, aunt," answered Mervyn, flushing, "I only meant that I would rather have my own dear nurse, and that I was very sorry she had been sent away to India again."

"She was not sent away, dear," answered Mrs. Dashwood; "she went by her own wish. She was fond of you, Mervyn, but she did not like to live in England, so she

hurried back to India as soon as she could. It will be better for you to learn English well, and try to pick up a little French from Sophie, than to be always talking with an Indian, my child. But the first thing you have to do, Mervyn, is to get fat and rosy like Bunny here. And you must grow tall, dear boy, for you are very, very small for your age; you must grow as fast as you can or this little girl will soon be the tallest," and Mrs. Dashwood pinched her daughter's plump cheek.

"Oh! but mama, dear, he can't make himself grow," remarked Bunny, as she stood up to measure herself with her cousin. "He has not got a key to wind up the works of himself, so he must just wait small till he begins to grow big."

"You are sharp enough, Miss Pert," said her mother, laughing. "I wish you would learn to be more steady and to remember what is said to you."

"Oh! I can remember," cried Bunny gaily; "I've got a splendid memory, haven't I, Miss Kerr?"

"Yes, I think you have, dear," said Miss

Kerr gravely; "but I am afraid you do not always remember at the right time. Eh! Bunny?"

"No, I don't," said the little girl, hanging her head; "I quite forgot when I got up and went to feed Frisk. But I don't think God minded that much; it was not much harm."

"God is always displeased at disobedience, Bunny," said Mrs. Dashwood very seriously. "The first thing God expects of a little child is that she should be obedient, and so my Bunny must try and remember things that she is not allowed to do, and then be very careful not to do them."

"Yes, mama, I will try," said Bunny in a subdued voice.

"That is right, dear, and I hope little Mervyn will do the same."

"Yes, aunt, I will indeed; papa told me to be very good until he came home, and I mean to be," he said, drawing himself up in a determined manner.

"Well, then, I am sure you will do Bunny good and help her to remember. But now run away like good children and tell Sophie to take you out for a walk. It is a

lovely morning, and a run on the sands will give you an appetite for your dinner."

"Very well, mama," cried. Bunny gaily, and away she darted out of the room singing and shouting at the top of her voice.

"Good morning, aunt," said Mervyn gently, and he followed his little cousin in a slow dignified manner, turning quietly to shut the drawing-room door behind him.

"What a harum-scarum that Bunny is!" said Mrs. Dashwood with a sigh. "It is very hard to make an impression on her."

"Yes, it is certainly, at least for more than a few minutes at a time," answered Miss Kerr; "she is always so ready to be good, no matter what she has done, that it is not easy to scold her much. But she is a good-hearted child, and I am sure in a short time you will see a great change in her."

"I hope so, indeed," said Mrs. Dashwood, "for she is a constant worry at present and extremely hard to manage."

CHAPTER VI.

BUNNY FORGETS AGAIN.

OUT of the gate and down the road went the two little cousins hand in hand, whilst close behind them walked Sophie, holding up a big umbrella, and carrying a yellow-covered novel under her arm.

On they went; the little ones laughing and talking pleasantly together, until they came to the entrance of the Spa, a gay promenade which the fashionables of the place were in the habit of frequenting in the morning to inhale the sea breezes, listen to sweet music and meet their friends.

Sophie liked the Spa, for there she saw much to delight and amuse her, whilst on the sands she always felt dull and weary.

But Bunny's ideas and those of her maid were not at all the same, for the little girl loved the sands, and could spend hours there digging and building castles of all shapes and sizes. Every day there was an angry dispute between the nurse and child as to where they should spend their time between breakfast and dinner; sometimes one came off victorious and sometimes the other. This morning, as usual, Bunny was quite determined to go on the sands, and Sophie was equally resolved to go down to the Spa.

"Mama said we were to go on the sands, Sophie, and I hate that old Spa," cried Bunny, making a rush towards the steps that led down to the sands; "I've got my spade, and so has Mervyn, and it's very unkind of you not to come there when it looks so nice and we both want to go."

"You'll just please to come where I tell you, mademoiselle," said Sophie, making a dive at the little girl, and dragging her through the turnstile and on to the bridge that led into the Cliff grounds.

"Don't you think you go to play any of your bad tricks on me. It is enough difficult

minding two of you in here without running all over the sands for you."

"Never mind, Bunny," said Mervyn gently, as they walked along together, "Miss Kerr will come on the sands with us after dinner, perhaps, and then we will have fine fun."

"Yes, indeed," answered the little girl with a toss of her head, and speaking in a loud voice so that the maid might hear her; "Miss Kerr always does what I ask her to do, but Sophie is a regular cross-patch."

"Sit down here, mademoiselle, and try to behave like a lady," cried Sophie, as she seated herself upon a bench at the top of the cliff, overlooking the promenade and sea.

"Oh, I don't want to sit down, I want to walk," cried Bunny tearfully; "why, we have just come out."

"Of course you want to do exactly what I tell you not to do," said Sophie angrily; "sit down, both of you, when I tell you," and she lifted first one and then the other, and placed them very roughly upon the bench.

In a few minutes a friend of Sophie's approached them, and after some pressing she took a seat beside the maid, and the two

children were pushed away by themselves to the other end of the bench.

"How long an age it is since I've seen you, Kitty!" cried Sophie, smiling pleasantly upon the new-comer.

"Yes, it is a long time," answered her friend, "and I've lots of news for you. I've heard of a place—but it might be dangerous to say much just now," and she glanced at the children.

"Oh, they will not pay attention," cried Sophie, "but it's easy to get rid of them if you like. Mees Bunny, you can run and play up and down for a little with your cousin. But do not go very far."

"That is nice!" exclaimed Bunny gaily; "thank you, Sophie, very much," and jumping off the seat, she took Mervyn by the hand and dragged him away for a race down the hill.

"What is that, Bunny? What is that?" cried Mervyn suddenly, and he pointed his finger towards the far end of the Spa. "It's like a train, at least one carriage of a train, and it's running so fast up the side of the cliff, and, oh dear! I declare there is another one just the same coming down past it."

"That is the lift, Mervyn; doesn't it look very funny hanging all down like that? Do you know, I went in it once with papa and it was lovely. It went along so smooth and so fast."

"I would like so much to go in it," said Mervyn, "I wonder if uncle will take me some day."

"Yes, I am sure he will, and me too," cried Bunny, skipping gaily along. "But I tell you what, Mervyn, wouldn't it be fun to go off now, all by ourselves."

"Now!" exclaimed Mervyn in surprise; "and what would Sophie say?"

"Oh, she will never know," said Bunny. "We'll go up in the lift and run down those paths among the trees ever so fast, and get back to her before she knows we have gone away at all. She always has so much to say to that friend of hers."

"Yes, but don't you have to pay to go up in the lift?" asked Mervyn, "and I have no money. Have you?"

"Of course we must pay, but it's only a penny each, I know," answered Bunny, "and I have got twopence in my pocket that papa

gave me this morning. I was going to give it to Miss Kerr, but I won't now."

"To Miss Kerr! Why should you give her your money?"

"Oh, that's a secret of mine. But I don't mind telling you, Mervyn, only you must not tell anyone, will you now? Promise you won't, like a good boy."

"I promise," answered Mervyn earnestly; "I would not tell anyone for the world."

"Well, one day Miss Kerr lent me three pennies to give to a poor boy, and I said I would pay her back very soon."

"Then I would not spend the pennies," said Mervyn decidedly; "keep them, Bunny, and give them to Miss Kerr when we go home."

"Oh, no; I would much rather go in the lift," cried Bunny. "Miss Kerr won't mind, for she said I need not be in a hurry to pay it."

"Still I think it would be better," began Mervyn solemnly, "to pay Miss—"

"Oh, bother! Never mind thinking, but come along, or we will not have time to go up in the lift before Sophie wants to go home for her dinner."

"I should like to go up in it very much,"

said Mervyn weakly, and casting longing looks at the distant lift, "but, indeed, Bunny—"

"Oh, you are silly!" cried the little girl. "Come on quick or we sha'n't have time," and grasping his hand, she hurried him down the steps, with just one backward glance to make sure that Sophie was still safe upon her bench. The maid's face was turned away towards her friend, who seemed to be telling a very interesting story; they were both completely occupied and quite unaware of what was going on about them.

"We shall have plenty of time!" said Bunny growing bold at the sight of the back of Sophie's head. "So come along, Mervyn, and see what the lift is like."

There was a great crowd of ladies and gentlemen walking up and down the promenade, and it took the children a long time to make their way as far as the band-stand, and even then they were at some distance from the wonderful lift that had attracted the little stranger so much.

As they hurried along, pushing their way right and left through the people, the band

began to play the "Blue Danube Waltzes," and Mervyn stopped short in delight.

"Oh, what a lovely waltz!" he cried. "Bunny dear, do let us stay here and listen to it. I'd much rather hear the music than go up in the lift, I would, indeed."

"Oh! no, no," cried Bunny, "I'm tired of that old band, it's a stupid old thing! We can come and listen to it to-morrow if you like; but do come on now, you can't think how nice it is flying up the cliff in the lift; besides, I am quite sure that we sha'n't get a chance to go another day."

"Oh, very well, if you want to go so much; but really, Bunny, I would far rather stay and hear the music," said Mervyn, "I would indeed."

"Bother the music! Do come, like a good boy," cried the little girl impatiently, and catching him by the hand she dragged him away through the gate that led to the lift.

There was a great crowd of people of all kinds waiting to go up in the lift, for it was getting near luncheon hour at the hotels, and many were anxious to be in good time for that pleasant meal.

Our little friends, Bunny and Mervyn, were so small that they were a good deal knocked about by the crowd, and the lift went off several times before they managed to push themselves anywhere near the front. At last the conductor noticed the two mites, and stepping forward in a kindly way, he took them by the hand, helped them into the carriage, and seating them side by side, remarked with a smile:

"You're a funny pair to be sure! Where is your nurse?"

"She's on the Spa, at least on a bench just at the top of the steps," said Bunny gaily as she arranged her short skirts about her on the seat. "My cousin is a stranger here, so I have brought him to see what the lift is like."

"Indeed!" said the man with a laugh. "What a kind little lady you are to be sure;" and then, as the carriage was full, he banged the door and away they went.

"Isn't it nice, Mervyn? Aren't you glad I brought you?" asked Bunny in a patronizing tone. "It is much nicer in here than sitting up on that bench. Isn't it?"

"Yes, I suppose it is," answered Mervyn doubtfully, "but oh, Bunny, I don't much like it! I have a sort of feeling as if I were in a ship, and it makes me giddy to look out —indeed it does."

"Don't look out then," said Bunny decisively. "But really, Mervyn, I think it's lovely—it's so—Oh, dear what is that?" she cried in alarm, as with a harsh grating noise the lift they were in, came to a sudden standstill, and the descending one shot quickly past them.

"Something gone wrong, I expect," grumbled an old gentleman beside her; "ah, they have to let us go down again! What an awful nuisance!"

"Oh, please, sir, is there going to be an accident?" cried Bunny in a voice of terror, and growing very pale. "My cousin is just come from India, and I am sure he will be frightened," and she put her little arm round Mervyn as if to protect him from danger.

"No, no, there is not going to be any accident, my little girl," answered the old gentleman with a kind smile. "Don't be afraid, we'll go up again in a minute; but I

must say the small cousin from India doesn't look half so much frightened as you do," and he patted her on the back. "There, now, off we go, you see, and we'll be at the top in a minute."

"Oh, I am so glad we are out of that horrid thing! and, Bunny, I am sure we should never have gone into it," cried Mervyn, as they at last stepped out of the lift and ran quickly along the cliff towards the entrance to the Spa grounds. "Just think, there might have been an accident and we might have been killed! Oh, it would have been so dreadful if such a thing had happened."

"Yes, it would," answered Bunny, "and Sophie will be angry, for we have been away such a long time. And oh, Mervyn, now I remember, mama told me that I should never leave my nurse when I was out with her, and I quite forgot, and there, I have been disobedient again! I am so sorry."

"Oh, Bunny, Bunny! why don't you try and remember?" cried Mervyn reproachfully, "and we promised aunt to be so good just before we came out," and tears of sorrow stood in the little boy's eyes.

"Never mind, Mervyn, dear," said Bunny kissing him, "it was my fault. Don't cry —you were not naughty at all. It was all because I forgot again. Oh, dear, I am afraid Miss Kerr will be angry with me. But come along quick, there is Sophie. See, she is looking about everywhere for us."

The two children trotted along at a brisk pace down the steep winding path that led through the pretty ornamental grounds with which the cliff, overhanging the Spa, was tastefully laid out. The trees were high and shady, so the little creatures were not visible from below as they ran quickly on their way. But soon they came to a part where there was not even a bush to hide them from view, and as Sophie walked up and down in despair, her eyes wandering about wildly in every direction, she suddenly caught sight of Bunny's white hat and blue sash, and with a shriek of rage, she bounded up the path, and taking hold of them by the shoulders shook them angrily as she cried in a hoarse voice:

"Ah, you wicked bad ones, I thought you were lost! I thought the kidnappers had taken you away for ever."

"Oh, we are too big for that!" cried Bunny, "and you need not be in such a rage, Sophie, we only went up in the lift, as Mervyn wanted to see what it was like;" and she walked past the maid with a scornful toss of her little head.

"I am very sorry, Sophie, indeed I am," said Mervyn gently; "I did not know we had so far to go. I am sorry you thought we were lost."

"Ah! much I care whether you are sorry or not," cried the angry maid. "It will be like Mademoiselle Bunny's sorrow—it will last one minute—and then off to some more naughty things," and with a push and a slap Sophie drove the two children on before her, over the bridge and away home to Holly Lodge.

"And now," she cried as they reached the hall door, "I will march you both up to Miss Kerr, and see what she will do with you. Some punishment should be given to you, and I don't know what to do."

"Oh, very well!" said Bunny, "we'll go and tell Miss Kerr ourselves. You need not come with us, we don't want you at all Come

along, Mervyn;" and taking the little boy by the hand, she dragged him up the stairs after her.

CHAPTER VII.

IN MISS KERR'S ROOM.

WHEN the two children reached Miss Kerr's bed-room, they found the door shut, and feeling quite certain that she was there, they knocked gently, and then stood very still upon the mat, expecting every moment to hear her voice calling to them to go in.

"Dear Miss Kerr," said Bunny at last, as, growing impatient at the delay, she put her little mouth to the key-hole and tried very hard to make herself heard within the room, "Mervyn and I want to tell you something, so please, please, open the door and let us in."

But to her surprise she received no answer, and becoming more and more cross and

impatient, she rattled the handle as noisily as possible in order to attract Miss Kerr's attention.

"I can't make out why she doesn't speak to us," said Mervyn in a whisper. "I think she must be asleep."

"Asleep!" exclaimed Bunny indignantly. "She isn't a baby, and she isn't ill, so why should she be asleep at this time of the day?"

"Well, in India people sleep in the day when they're not a bit ill, just because it's hot—so why shouldn't they here?"

"What a lot of sillies they must be in India then!" cried Bunny contemptuously. "Why, I have not been asleep in the day for years—not since I was quite small," and she rattled away more noisily than ever at the door-handle.

"Miss Kerr is not there, children," said a housemaid who passed along the passage at that moment, "she has been in the drawing-room all the morning."

"Has she?" said Bunny, "oh, then, I tell you what, Mervyn, we'll just go in and wait for her. She will be sure to come up in a few

minutes to wash her hands before dinner, and then we'll tell her."

"Oh, but there is Sophie calling to us to get ready ourselves. She will be awfully angry if we don't go," said Mervyn. "Listen how she is screaming."

"Never mind her, the nasty, cross old thing!" cried Bunny, opening the bed-room door. "Come in, Mervyn, come in! There is Sophie —do be quick, or she will catch us and drag us off with her—and then she'll tell Miss Kerr before we do. Come in, come in," and once more she hurried her cousin along with her, against his own will and inclination.

"But, Bunny, I do think we ought to go to Sophie, I do indeed," said Mervyn; "listen, she is asking the housemaid if she has seen us anywhere. And oh, she is coming here to look for us—she will be awfully cross! Do let us go into the nursery quietly and take off our things and get ready for dinner."

"Well, you are a silly, Mervyn! That would spoil all the fun. But I know what I'll do—I'll lock the door, and then Sophie will not be able to get us. I can easily open it for Miss Kerr when she comes up," cried

Bunny; and before Mervyn could say a word to prevent her, the little girl turned the key in the lock, and, clapping her hands with delight, danced up and down the room singing at the top of her voice:

"What a good plan! What a good plan!
And the dinner is in the frying pan!"

"Indeed, then I wish it was here," grumbled Mervyn; "I'm awfully hungry, and it would be much better to go down to dinner now, and tell Miss Kerr afterwards, or at dinner-time, Bunny, indeed it would."

"Yes, and let Sophie hear her scolding us," cried the little girl. "I am hungry too, I can tell you, Mervyn; but Miss Kerr won't be long, I am sure. Hasn't she got a pretty room? and doesn't the sea and the bridge look nice from the window?"

"Well enough," answered Mervyn crossly, as he rolled about in an arm-chair that stood away in the furthest corner. "But oh, it is silly to be sticking up here when the dinner is ready down-stairs—oh, I smell it, and it does smell nice! and I am so hungry, and it's very stupid of you to keep me shut up here."

"Well, I thought you were sorry and wanted to tell Miss Kerr so," said Bunny complacently, as she shook out her frock and admired herself in the long glass. "It's very greedy to talk so much about your dinner."

"Is it?" grumbled Mervyn. "Well, I don't care! I'm sure you're just as bad twisting about and looking at yourself in the glass, for that's being vain, and I'd rather be greedy than vain, so I would, Bunny."

"Would you? Oh, that's because you're a boy. Boys are greedy, but it's vulgar to be greedy—Sophie says it is, but it's different to be vain, I—"

"Mademoiselle Bunny, come out this minute. Ah, what a little naughty one you are! and that cousin of yours he is a wicked bad boy—he leads you into the mischiefs of all kinds. Come out, I say, the dinner is ready and Miss Kerr is waiting for you;" and Sophie rattled the handle and hammered at the door till the whole passage was filled with the noise and the other servants came running from all parts of the house to see what could be the matter.

"What is wrong, Sophie?" asked Miss

Kerr, as she too hurried upstairs wondering what was going on in the corridor. "Why are you making such a dreadful noise?"

"Ah! ma foi! Noise, Miss Kerr! What can I do but make a noise, when those two children have locked themselves into your room, and will not come out for their dinner. Is it then a wonder that I make a noise?" and she began once more to bang the door as if she would like to break it in.

"That was Miss Kerr's voice, Bunny," whispered Mervyn; "do open the door and let us go out to her now."

"Is it really? I only heard Sophie. Miss Kerr," she called, "are you there?"

"Yes, Bunny, I am here. Come out, child; come to your dinner. You must be starving, both of you."

"Yes, we are," answered Bunny, "and we will go out if you will send Sophie away. Mervyn and I want to tell you something."

"Ah! what a naughty child!" cried Sophie. "Meess Kerr, they have both been so very difficult, so wicked! They have run away, they have gone in the lift, they have just escaped being seized by kidnappers and—"

"That's a great story, Sophie," cried Bunny through the door, "for there was not a single kidnapper near us; was there, Mervyn?"

"No, there wasn't," said Mervyn, "not one, Sophie, there wasn't really."

"Now!" shouted Bunny triumphantly, "you see you are quite wrong, Sophie."

"Open the door, Bunny, this minute," said Miss Kerr decidedly, "I am surprised that you should behave in such a naughty way, just when I thought you were going to be a good girl."

"I'll open it now, indeed I will," cried Bunny, "and please, please don't be angry with us. We are so sorry we ran away from Sophie, indeed we are, and that is the reason we came up here, just to tell you so."

All the time the child was talking she was also working away at the key, trying her very best to open the door. But no matter how she turned or pulled it, round it would not go, and at last, hot and tired with so many violent efforts, she begged Mervyn to try if he could make it turn.

"No, Bunny, I can't," said the boy sadly,

after working patiently at the key for some time. "It's no use, I can't do it at all."

"Oh dear, oh dear!" cried Bunny in a miserable voice, "what shall we do? Miss Kerr, dear, we can't open the door, it's locked quite fast."

"Take the key out of the lock and push it under the door, and I will try and open it from this side," said Miss Kerr; "it was really very naughty of you to lock yourselves up in such a way. But be quick and give me the key."

After a good deal of pulling and tugging, Bunny at last managed to get the key out of the lock, and kneeling on the floor she tried with all the strength of her tiny hands to push it out under the door.

But the key was too large or the door fitted too closely, and the little girl gave a cry of alarm as she found that it was quite impossible to get it out into the passage.

"Oh, Mervyn, dear, it won't go out! Oh! Miss Kerr, what shall we do?" she cried, bursting into tears; "if we can't open the door what shall we do?"

"And I am so hungry," said Mervyn in a

doleful tone. "How nasty it will be to be stuck in here for ever! Oh, pray open the door! Oh! pray open the door, Miss Kerr."

"Throw the key out of the window, Bunny," said Miss Kerr, "and I will go round and pick it up, and let you out in a minute."

"Oh! the window is shut. The window is shut," cried the two children in despair, "and we cannot reach to open it. What shall we do? What shall we do?"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Miss Kerr, "who can have shut the window?"

"I am sorry to say I did, miss," said the housemaid. "The wind was so strong upon the window that was open, that I shut it, intending to open the middle one, but I forgot all about it when I was leaving the room."

"It is extremely awkward, and has helped to give the poor children a great fright," said Miss Kerr. "Go and bring me the keys of all the doors, Sarah, and I will try if any of them will fit the lock. Don't be uneasy, Bunny; don't cry, little Mervyn. We will get you out some way or other, you may be quite sure, so don't be afraid. I have sent for

some keys to try if they will open the door, so don't fret. Ah! here they are."

One after the other the keys were taken and tried, but not one was of the slightest use. One was too large, and another too small, and Miss Kerr felt really grieved for the poor little prisoners, whose sobs were distinctly heard through the door.

"What can I do?" she said. "It is really very hard on them to be shut in there for such a long, long time! And they are so hungry too."

"Send for a man to pick the lock, miss," said Sarah. "Ashton will get some one from one of the shops."

"But that will take such a time!" cried Miss Kerr; "it is a long way to the town, and the children want their dinner so badly. No, I must think of some quicker plan than that. Ah, now I know one!" she exclaimed with a sudden smile; "it is a pity, but it can't be helped! Bunny, dear, will you take the poker, break a pane of glass with it, and throw the key out upon the grass. Be very careful not to cut your fingers."

"I'll do it!" cried Mervyn, jumping up

out of the chair, where he had been rolling about disconsolately. "I'd just like to break a window, and I'm taller than you, Bunny; do let me, like a good girl."

"No, no; Miss Kerr told me to do it," cried Bunny, "and I should like to break a pane too;" and seizing the poker she sent it crash through the glass.

"Oh, what fun! What a rare smash!" exclaimed Mervyn in delight. "I will throw the key out;" and he darted across the room, picked up the key, and flung it with all his strength at the window.

But he did not aim straight, and instead of flying into the garden the key merely shattered the glass a little more, and fell back again on to the floor.

"You stupid boy! What a bad shot!" cried Bunny, and taking it up between her finger and thumb she stepped on a chair, and dropped it down cleverly upon the grass, just at Miss Kerr's feet.

"That is right," said the governess with a smile, as she stooped to pick up the key; "and now don't you think it would be a good punishment for all your naughtiness to keep

you both locked up there for the rest of the afternoon?"

"Oh, no, no, pray do not do that, Miss Kerr, we are so sorry and so hungry!" and the two little faces, as they were pressed against the window, looked so utterly miserable and woebegone, that the kind-hearted governess could not bear to carry out her threat of punishment, but hurried away as fast as possible to let the poor children out.

When the door was at last opened and they were told to come forth, Mervyn hung back and did not dare to raise his eyes to Miss Kerr's face. Bunny, on the contrary, greeted her with a cry of joy, and springing into her arms, kissed her heartily over and over again.

"I'm so glad to get out! I'm so glad to get out! Oh, I was afraid we should have to stay in here all day by ourselves."

"Well, I hope this will be a lesson to you never to shut yourself into a room again, Bunny," said Miss Kerr severely. "It was a very foolish thing to do, and I cannot say that I am very sorry that you got a little fright, for I really think you deserved

to suffer something for your naughtiness. But tell me, little man," she said to Mervyn, "are you not glad to get out too? You don't look so cheerful over it as Bunny does."

"I am very glad to get out. But I—I—wanted to tell you," he said with much difficulty, and clasping his little hands tightly together. "I want—to tell you—that I am very sorry I was disobedient and ran away from Sophie."

"I am glad to hear you say you are sorry, dear," answered Miss Kerr. "I am sure you mean it Mervyn, and that I may trust you not to be disobedient again."

"Yes, you may trust me, indeed you may," the boy cried with a bright smile, "I will really try to be good, and make Bunny remember if I can."

"Naughty little Bun! Why do you always forget as you do?" said Miss Kerr gently. "I did think you were going to be good to-day, and just see how you have disappointed me!"

"I'm very sorry," murmured Bunny, hanging her head. "I did want to be good, and I promise you I won't be naughty again. I'll

always stay as close up to Sophie as ever I can when we go out, I will indeed."

"Very well, then, I will not say any more about the matter. Run away now, like good children, and get ready for dinner. And Bunny, dear, if Sophie is a little cross, be gentle and polite with her, for you have tormented and tried her temper very much, you know."

"Oh, I will be ever so nice and kind to her, dear, dear Miss Kerr," cried Bunny as she gave the governess a bear-like hug and another loving kiss. "I'll be awfully polite;" and laughing merrily she jumped off her perch on Miss Kerr's knee, and ran down the passage to the nursery, waving her hat and singing at the top of her voice.

"Poor little giddy-pate!" said Miss Kerr with a sigh. "I wonder how long she will keep all those splendid promises. But why don't you go off and get ready for dinner too, Mervyn?" she asked in surprise as she saw the little boy lingering at the door in a shy uncertain manner. "Run along, dear, at once."

"Will you—give me a kiss?" said Mervyn

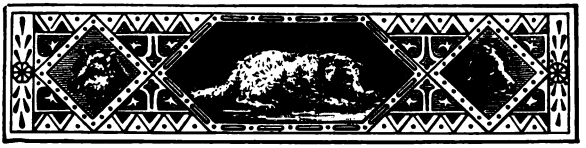
with a deep blush. "I want to know that you have really forgiven me."

"Of course I have, dear boy," answered Miss Kerr, and she put her arm round him and kissed him affectionately. "I have quite forgiven you, Mervyn, and I feel sure that you are going to be a very good boy."

"I am going to try very hard to be good," replied the boy solemnly, "and as Bunny is so small perhaps I may make her do the same."

"Very likely, Mervyn, dear, for good example is sure to have a strong effect upon little Bunny, who is more thoughtless than really naughty. But run off now, dear, and get your hands washed as quickly as possible. The dinner will not be fit to eat if we keep it waiting any longer."

"That is true," said Mervyn with a bright happy smile. "We have kept it waiting a dreadfully long time, and we are all just dying with hunger, I'm sure;" and he too went off singing to the nursery.



CHAPTER VIII.

BUNNY TRIES TO SHOW OFF.

FOR some time after this there was a marked improvement in little Bunny's behaviour, and everyone in the house was delighted with the change, and rejoiced over it in a very open manner.

"It is perfectly wonderful!" said Mrs. Dashwood; "our little troublesome is becoming quite a well-behaved young person. I feel very grateful to you, Miss Kerr, for I believe it is all owing to your tender care and kind good-nature that the child is improving so much."

"I don't think I have so much to do with the change as little Mervyn," answered Miss Kerr with a smile. "I have lectured poor Bunny very often, it is true, but I think a

good obedient little friend does a child more real good than all the scoldings and lectures in the world."

"Yes, I daresay it is an excellent thing," replied Mrs. Dashwood; "but still I think your lectures and sermons have improved my poor darling a great deal. She was very ignorant when you came to look after her."

"Yes, she was," said Miss Kerr; "she did not know much, poor child, and what was worse, did not care to learn anything. But lately she has begun to get on very nicely. And there, again, you see it is Mervyn who has done her good, for her whole ambition is to do everything better than he does it."

"The little rogue!" exclaimed Mrs. Dashwood laughing. "Well, it is a good thing to have found a way to make her work. Where is she now, I wonder?"

"Mr. Dashwood took her off with him to the stables. Mervyn went too, as it seems there is a pleasant surprise awaiting them there. They both went off laden with bread for Frisk."

"I think I can guess what the surprise is," said Mrs. Dashwood with a smile; "I—"

"Oh, mama, mama! we are glad! we are glad!" cried Bunny bursting suddenly into the room, followed by Mervyn with a radiant look of happiness on his little white face. "What do you think? Guess what has happened. Just guess what papa has given Mervyn."

"Dear aunt, it was so kind of uncle to buy me such a—"

"Let her guess—let her guess, Mervyn. Don't tell her what he bought you. Miss Kerr, what did papa buy for him? Something living, something with a tail, something with a nose, a dear velvety nose and a soft silky coat," cried Bunny, as she danced up and down the drawing-room in high glee.

"A kitten," said Miss Kerr gravely.

"A kitten! oh, the idea!" exclaimed Bunny, "as if people bought kittens."

"Something far nicer!" said Mervyn in a voice full of pleasure. "I'll tell her, Bunny, something to ride—"

"No, no, don't tell, don't tell!" cried the little girl, laying her hand quickly over his mouth. "Mama, guess, guess."

"A pony, Bun, a little brown pony," said Mrs. Dashwood, smiling brightly upon the eager excited children.

"You dear clever mamey, that's just what it is," exclaimed Bunny, giving her mother an affectionate hug. "And Mervyn's so pleased, and I am so glad, and oh, it will be so nice going out to ride together!" and jumping up sideways on the arm of the sofa the little girl began to work herself about as if she were really on Frisk's back and trotting along a country road.

"My dear Bunny, please don't," cried Mrs. Dashwood, as she felt the sofa upon which she was lying, shaken up and down by the child's vigorous antics. "Please don't, dear, you hurt me very much."

"Oh, I am so sorry!" cried Bunny bounding quickly down from her perch, and holding her face up for a pardoning kiss. "But won't it be nice, mama? Frisk is so glad to have a friend in the stable with him, and it will be fun for me to have Mervyn to ride with."

"Yes, it will be very nice, dear. But, Bunny, you talk so much that Mervyn never

gets saying a word. Tell me, my dear, do you really like your pony?"

"Oh, yes, aunt, I am delighted with him, he is so pretty. It was very good of uncle to buy him for me."

"And you will not be afraid to ride him, I hope," she said with a smile.

"No, I think not, at least not if we go along quietly. But Bunny says she will make Frisk go awfully fast, and then my pony will run after him, and that she is sure I shall be frightened and hold on by the mane and—"

"Bunny, Bunny, you must not say such naughty things," cried Mrs. Dashwood shaking her finger at the mischievous child. "But don't mind her, Mervyn. She does not ride at all so splendidly herself. The groom or her papa always holds Frisk by a leading rein, so it would be quite impossible for her to go on as fast as she likes; so do not mind her."

"Oh, I don't feel a bit afraid if some one holds my pony by a rein," said Mervyn bravely; "not one bit; I think it will be lovely riding along together."

"That is right," said Mrs. Dashwood. "I am sure you will be a clever horseman, for your papa was when he was a boy."

"And so he is now, aunt. He has a beautiful horse, and he looks splendid on it when he goes off to ride," cried Mervyn, smiling brightly at the recollection; "I used to think he looked grander than any of the other officers."

"Poor little man," said his aunt gently, as she smoothed back the hair from his brow. "You are very fond of your papa, Mervyn, and do you know, I think you will be like him when you grow big and strong."

"I want to be like him in every way," said Mervyn, "and I mean to be an officer when I grow up."

"And go away to that nasty, hot India," cried Bunny; "oh, I'd be so lonely if you went away again—please don't, Mervyn, please don't."

"What is Mervyn not to do, my little woman?" asked Mr. Dashwood, who entered the room at this moment.

"He's not to go back to India again, because I should be so lonely without him,"

cried Bunny catching hold of her papa's hand and laying her little cheek against it; "you won't let him go, papa, will you, dear?"

"No, indeed, I couldn't think of such a thing. But I am sure he won't want to go when he hears that his papa is coming home for Christmas; eh, my boy?"

"That is good news, uncle," cried Mervyn joyfully; "I never thought he would come so soon. Not much fear of my wanting to go to India when he comes home."

"So I thought," said Mr. Dashwood. "And now, children, when are we to have our first ride?"

"Now, now; to-day, to-day," cried Bunny; "dear papa, let us go off at once!"

"Very well, my dear. I thought you would like to go soon, so I told John to get the ponies and horses ready in half an hour. You had better run and get on your habit—that is, if Miss Kerr will let you both off with your afternoon lessons. What do you think, Miss Kerr, do they deserve a ride?"

"Yes, I think they do, for they have both been very good," answered the governess with a smile; "besides, I really don't think they

look studiously inclined—they are very much excited."

"I couldn't learn a lesson if I tried ever so," cried Bunny, "I really couldn't, so I am glad you are going to let us off. Good-bye, Miss Kerr; good-bye, mama. I sha'n't be long, papa, dear;" and away she flew in breathless haste to the nursery.

Sophie had received a message informing her that her young lady was going out for a ride, and when Bunny went up to be dressed she found her pretty brown habit and neat felt hat laid all ready for her on the bed.

"That is a dear good Sophie," she cried, and she was in such good humour that she allowed the maid to brush her hair and put on her habit without uttering a single cross word or complaint.

"Thank you very much, that will do nicely," she said politely, as Sophie put the last finishing touch to her curls; then taking her little whip with the pretty silver top from the maid's hand, she gathered up her skirts and ran quickly down to the hall-door.

"What a pleasure it is to dress her when she is so good and polite as that!" said Sophie

to herself as she watched the little figure running away from her down the passage. "What a pity it is that children are so often naughty and troublesome!"

When Bunny arrived in the hall she found her papa and Mervyn quite ready to start for their ride.

"Oh, how nice Brownie looks!" cried the little girl in delight, as her cousin was lifted on to his new pony; "but I don't think he is as handsome as you, old Frisk. Is he, papa?"

"I don't know, I am sure, dear," answered her papa, laughing; "but I suppose you like Frisk best because he is your own."

"Yes, I suppose I do," said Bunny, and placing her little foot on her papa's hand she sprang nimbly to her saddle. "Good-bye, Miss Kerr, good-bye."

Mr. Dashwood mounted his horse, the groom jumped on his, and the whole party rode gaily up the avenue and out of the gate.

"I declare Mervyn sits very well, papa," said Bunny in a patronizing manner, as she looked back at her cousin, who was following them with the servant.

"Yes, of course he sits well; why shouldn't he?" asked Mr. Dashwood; "he wants a few lessons and then he will ride very well, I am sure."

"Yes, I daresay," said Bunny; "but he never rode before, you know, except just little short rides on Frisk, and he'd be awfully afraid to go without the leading rein, I know."

"Yes, and quite right too," said her father; "it's only children who ride very well who should be allowed to go without a leading rein, and especially on a country road. Supposing the pony took it into his head to bolt—what do you think would happen then?"

"Oh, he could be pulled up quite tight by his rein. I wouldn't be a bit afraid to ride all by myself."

"Wouldn't you, indeed, Miss Vanity. Well, I would rather not trust you," said Mr. Dashwood laughing; "I think it is very likely you would find Master Frisk rather too much for you without a leading rein, my dear child."

"No, I shouldn't," answered Bunny, bending over her pony and patting his neck; "Frisk

and I are such friends he would be sure to do what I told him. Wouldn't you, Friskie?"

"Don't trust him or your own power too much, Miss Bunny," replied her father with a smile. "But who is that coming down the road towards us? I think I ought to know him."

"Why, papa, it's Mr. Davis, that nice old gentleman who gave me the box of sweets; don't you remember? I'm sure it is."

"Yes, so it is," said Mr. Dashwood; "what sharp eyes you have, little woman! You and Mervyn had better ride on with John, as I want to say a word to Mr. Davis."

"Very well, papa, but don't be long, pray," said the little girl; "it's so much nicer talking to you than to John."

"No, I sha'n't be very long, dear. Good morning, Mr. Davis," said Mr. Dashwood to a tall fine-looking old gentleman who at this moment rode up to them on a beautiful chestnut horse; "I am very glad to see you. This little girl of mine knew you a long way off."

"Ha! Miss Bunny and I are great friends," answered Mr. Davis with a smile, as he bent forward to shake her warmly by the hand.

"Those pretty eyes of yours are a deal sharper than mine, my dear, for I had not the faintest idea who it was that was coming along the road. But I am glad I met you, Dashwood, as I want to say a few words to you about—" and he lowered his voice to a whisper.

"Very well," said Mr. Dashwood; "I'll send these little people on with the groom, and ride down the road a short way with you. John," he called to the servant, "take Miss Bunny's rein and go on up the hill with the children, turn in at Lady Edith's Drive, and I will overtake you in a few minutes."

"Yes, sir," said the groom, touching his hat respectfully, and riding forward he took the rein from his master's hand.

"Ride quietly along and I will be back to you very soon, Bunny," said Mr. Dashwood, and then he turned his horse round and walked it leisurely down the road again with Mr. Davis.

"Oh, what a pretty place!" cried Mervyn, as the riding party trotted along through a gate and into a cool shady avenue, with tall stately trees growing closely together on every side.

"This is Lady Edith's Drive," said Bunny; "I think it is the prettiest place about Scarborough. It is so cool and pleasant, and then it is so quiet."

"Why is it called Lady Edith's Drive?" asked Mervyn.

"I don't know," answered Bunny. "Do you, John?"

"Well, no, Miss," said John; "I can't exactly say as I do. I suppose some Lady Edith used to drive here very often."

"I suppose so, indeed," said Bunny, laughing merrily at this explanation.

"I don't think that tells us much, John," said Mervyn; "anyone might know that."

"Yes, sir, very likely, sir," replied the groom; "but I never asks no questions. If I'm told a place is called by a name, I never asks why or wherefore, but just takes it as the name that it's to be called by."

"Well, I think you are very foolish then," said Mervyn; "I like asking questions, and it's a very good way to learn about things, I can tell you."

"I daresay it is, sir, for a young gentleman like you, sir. But you see the people about

me don't know no more nor I do, so what's the use of asking them what's this an' what's that, an' showin' them I don't know nothin' myself."

"I never thought of that," said Mervyn, "but I don't think it matters about showing that you don't know. Miss Kerr says no one should be ashamed to ask a question about a thing they don't understand."

"John, John," cried Bunny suddenly as she pulled very hard at the leading rein in order to attract the groom's attention, "I want to ask you something. Stoop down that I may whisper it into your ear."

The man did as she requested; but when he had heard what she wanted him to do he shook his head in a very determined manner, saying, "I couldn't on no account, Miss. Your pa would be as angry as anything."

"No, he wouldn't, John. I told him I could manage Frisk myself, and he only laughed. Do let me—just for a few minutes. I'll go along quite quietly, you'll see I will. I want to show Mervyn that I can ride better than he does, and that I am not afraid to go without a leading rein."

"Well, it's very quiet here, so I suppose it

could not be much harm," said the man, yielding a little at her pleading voice; "I really don't think it could be any harm;" and he turned in his saddle and looked carefully up and down the drive.

"Harm!" exclaimed Bunny, "of course it could do no harm. Oh! pray take off the rein, John," and she looked up into his face in a most imploring manner.

"Well, you are a funny little lady, to be sure," he answered with a good-natured laugh, and, bending forward, he unfastened the leading rein and put it into his pocket.

"Thank you, John," said the child, sitting up proudly on her pony. "It feels ever so much nicer without it; it's so silly to be always led along by a rein like a baby. Mervyn, I am riding all by myself. Wouldn't you like to ride without a leading rein?" she shouted across at her cousin, who was trotting along quietly at the other side of the groom; "it's twice as nice to feel that you can go just as you like."

"I feel just as nice as I am, Bunny, thank you," said Mervyn; "I would rather have the rein, thank you."

"I can't hear what you say, so I think I'll go round beside you, Mervyn," she cried gaily; and, raising her whip, she brought it down heavily upon poor Frisk's back, and tried to make him go round beside Brownie. But Frisk was not accustomed to such treatment, and tossed his head and whisked up his tail, but absolutely refused to go to the other side of John's horse, no matter what she did to him.

"You naughty pony," she cried, "you must do what I tell you," and she tugged violently at his mouth, and gave him another sharp blow with her whip. This was more than the pony could bear; and before his little mistress knew where she was, he pricked up his ears, and with an angry toss of his head galloped away down the road as fast as he could.

"Stop, Miss Bunny, for goodness sake stop," shouted the groom; "you must not go so fast; come back here at once."

"I can't stop—I can't!" shrieked the little girl in a voice of terror. "Oh! he's running away—he's running away;" and, completely overcome with fright, poor Bunny dropped

her reins, and, catching hold of the pony's mane, held on to him with all her strength.

"What a fool I was to let her go!" cried the groom; "what on earth will my master say to me?" Goodness, the silly child has let go her reins; she'll be off—she'll be off;" and, spurring up his horse, he rode after the runaway, hoping to overtake him and put a stop to his mad race.

But the noise of the horses as they clattered down the road after him seemed only to excite Master Frisk, and on he went faster than ever.

As the pony reached the end of the drive, and poor little Bunny had become so weak and faint from terror that she was in great danger of being thrown to the ground, a young lad of about sixteen jumped up from the grass where he had been seated, and, dashing forward, seized Frisk by the head and brought him to a sudden stand-still.

"Poor little girl," said the boy kindly, as he lifted Bunny from her saddle and laid her gently on the grass. "What a fright you have had! How did this beggar come to run away? He looks quiet enough."

"I whipped him," answered Bunny in a shaky voice; "and oh! I thought I was going to fall," and she put her hand to her head as if she still felt giddy.

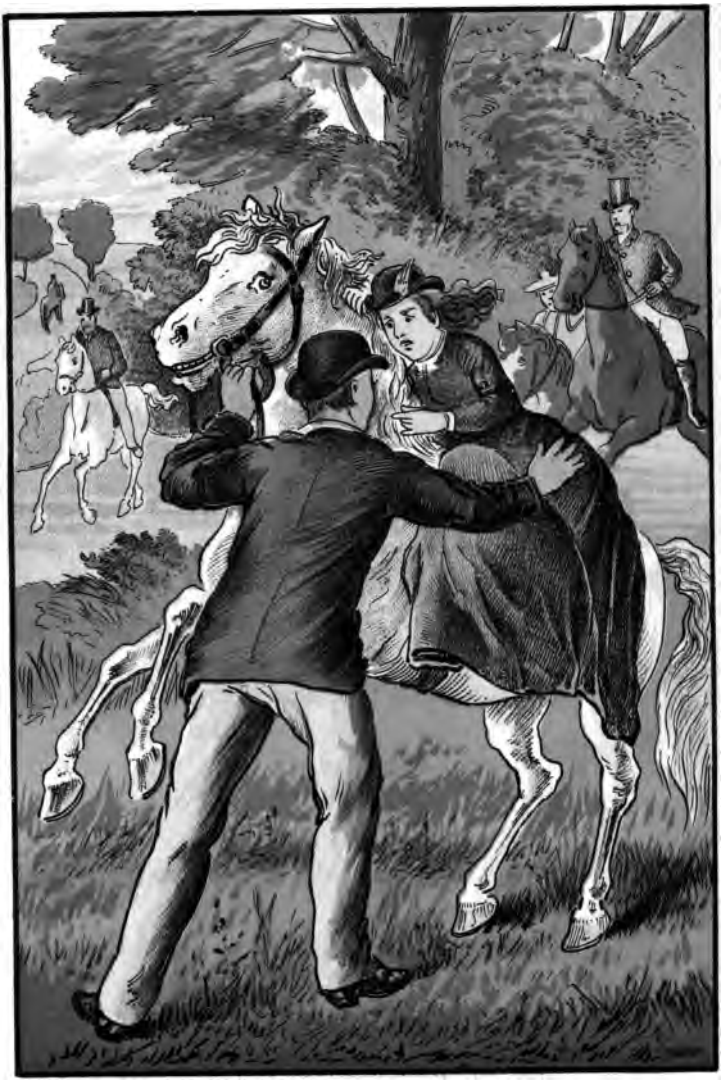
"You were certainly very nearly off," said the boy; "but what a fool that groom of yours was to let a kid like you ride without a leading rein; he shouldn't have done such a thing."

"Oh! but I begged him so hard that he let me go," said Bunny; "he didn't want to let me, and—"

"Miss Bunny, I'm ashamed of you," cried John, riding up beside her. "You promised you'd ride quite quiet beside me, and you broke your word. I'm very thankful to you, sir, I'm sure," he continued, turning to the young stranger. "In another minute this little lady might have been thrown on her head and been killed on the spot."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! it wasn't my fault," cried Bunny, bursting into tears; "I only mean't to go round beside Mervyn, and Frisk ran away and—"

"Don't cry, dear," said the strange lad kindly; "you must not say another word to



FRANCIS SAVES BUNNY.

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her, my man," he continued, turning to the groom; "she is rather shaken with her fright, and it's best to leave her alone. Take hold of this pony and I will go and get your young lady some fresh water; that will do her good."

"Very well, sir," said John, pulling the leading rein once more from his pocket, and fastening it on to Frisk's bridle with an angry jerk. "It's not my place to scold, Miss Bunny, but a young lady should keep her word, and not get a servant into trouble."

"But I didn't mean to break my word, John, indeed I didn't," sobbed Bunny. "Oh! why did papa leave us? oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"Drink this, you poor little mite," said her new friend as he held a flask full of fresh water to her lips. "It will do you ever so much good. I will bathe your face for you, and then you will see how comfortable you will feel, but you must not cry any more."

"Thank you so much," said Bunny, drinking off the water; "it is very cool and nice."

"Yes," the boy answered, "it is very refreshing, but this will do you more good, I am sure;" and, removing her hat, he took a

neatly-folded, perfectly clean handkerchief from his pocket, shook it out, and, dipping it into the water, bathed the child's face as tenderly as a girl might have done.

"You are very kind," said Bunny, as she raised her big blue eyes to his face; "you are a nice good boy, and she raised her face to give him a kiss."

"That's right," he said smiling; "you are beginning to look more cheerful," and, stooping, he kissed her gently on the forehead.

At this moment the sound of horses' feet was heard coming along the road, and Mr. Dashwood soon appeared, riding quickly towards them.

"What is the matter?" he cried in alarm, as, drawing up sharply, he sprang from his horse and rushed to his little girl's side.

"Oh! papa, papa!" cried the child, running into her father's arms, "your poor Bunny was nearly killed, only this nice boy stopped Frisk and took me off his back."

"My poor darling!" cried Mr. Dashwood, lifting her gently from the ground, and smoothing back her ruffled hair, "I am very thankful to God that you are not hurt.

Thank you, too, my lad, for your kind and ready assistance," he said to the young stranger, grasping him warmly by the hand, "and now tell me, sir," he cried with a stern look, as he turned to the groom, "how it is that the child whom I left in your care came to be in such danger."

"If you please, sir, Miss Bunny asked—" began John very nervously.

"Yes, papa, I—it was all my fault," interrupted the little girl; "don't scold John. I wanted to show Mervyn that I could ride better than he does, and as I could not do so properly with John holding me by the rein, I begged him to let me go, and I promised to ride quietly; but I whipped Frisk, and he ran off so fast that I got frightened, and—"

"It was very wrong of you, John, to allow the child to ride without a rein, and I am really angry and vexed that you should not have taken more care of her when she was left in your charge."

"Indeed, sir, I am very sorry, and it shall never happen again," said John.

"I hope not," said Mr. Dashwood; "and as for you, Bunny, I am very much surprised

that you should have been so naughty. You know I told you you could not manage Frisk without a leading rein."

"Yes, I know you did, dear papa," said Bunny, as she rubbed her little face up and down against her father's cheek, "but don't scold us any more. We are all very sorry, aren't we, John?"

"Very, Miss," answered the groom; "I'd rather have died than let any harm come to you, an' I hope master will forgive me for lettin' you have your own way about the rein."

"I forgive you this time, John," said Mr. Dashwood; "but remember for the future you are to keep Miss Bunny well to your side when you take her out to ride on her pony."

"Yes, sir, surely I will," answered the man earnestly; "I will never do what Miss Bunny asks me to do again, never while I live."

"And now, my dear fellow," said Mr. Dashwood, turning to the young stranger and shaking him once more by the hand, "I cannot tell you how grateful I feel to you. May I be permitted to ask your name?"

"My name is Francis Collins; but indeed I did not do much," the boy answered modestly.

"You have done me a very great service, Master Francis, and one that I can never repay you," said Mr. Dashwood earnestly. "Do you live anywhere about here?"

"No, sir; I live in London," replied the lad; "my father is in India with his regiment, and I am staying up here for a time with my aunt."

"Is your father a captain? and is he in India now?" asked Mervyn shyly.

"Yes, little man," answered young Collins with a smile, "he is a captain in the 45th, and is now stationed at Jublepoore."

"Why, Captain Collins is papa's great friend, and of course he was my friend too; and Mrs. Collins was so good and kind to me. Oh, I did love her so much!" cried Mervyn, looking up into the lad's face. "Are you the Frank she used to talk to me about?"

"Yes, I am the Frank, her only child," said the boy sadly; "poor mother! it's a whole year and a half since I saw her last;" and tears came into his eyes as he spoke.

"I have often heard my brother-in-law speak of your father, my dear boy, and I am very glad to have made your acquaintance," said Mr. Dashwood as he seated his little daughter upon her pony. "Where are you staying?"

"I am living with my aunt at a quiet hotel on the West Cliff."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Mr. Dashwood, "for you will be able to come over and see us. Our name is Dashwood, and we are staying at Holly Lodge, a house standing in its own grounds and facing the sea, yonder on the South Cliff. Anyone will point it out to you; so be sure and pay us a visit some day soon."

"Yes, thank you, I certainly will," the boy replied with a bright smile; "I must have a talk with this little chap, Mr. Dashwood, and find out all I can about my father and mother from him. By the by I suppose you are the Mervyn Hastings she told me she missed so much."

"Yes, I am Mervyn Hastings; and oh, did she miss me?" cried the little fellow eagerly.

"Most dreadfully! And I don't wonder,

for you seem to be a capital little fellow," said Frank Collins, patting Mervyn on the shoulder.

"Come over and lunch at the children's dinner to-morrow at two o'clock, and then you and Mervyn can have a long talk together," said Mr. Dashwood as he sprang to his horse. "It is rather late now, so these youngsters must get home as quickly as they can. Remember we shall all be delighted to see you, if you can spare time for visiting."

"Oh, do come, do come," said Mervyn, earnestly.

"Mama will be so glad to see you," cried Bunny, "so do come, please."

"Thank you all very much," answered the lad brightly; "I will be sure to be at Holly Lodge by two o'clock. Good-bye, Mr. Dashwood; good-bye, Miss Bunny; good-bye, little Mervyn;" and Frank lifted his hat politely as the riding party turned and rode away from him down the drive towards Scarborough.

CHAPTER IX.

MISS KERR PROMISES A PRIZE.

THE next morning was very wet, and as it was quite impossible for the children to go out, Miss Kerr insisted on their going into the library to learn their lessons.

Bunny pouted and declared that her papa did not wish them to sit still all day over their books, and that it would be much nicer to run about the house and play at "Hide and seek."

"Yes, it would be pleasanter for you, Bunny," said Miss Kerr, "but you forget that 'Hide and seek' is a very noisy game, and that your mama's head is aching so much that she could not bear the noise you would

be sure to make. Come now, be good children, and try to learn your lessons as well as you possibly can."

"I hate lessons! and so does Mervyn," cried the little girl in a cross voice. "Don't you, Mervyn?"

"No, I don't," answered the boy; "I will go if you like, Miss Kerr, for I want to learn how to write soon, that I may be able to send papa a letter."

"You are a good boy, Mervyn," said the governess with a smile as she took him by the hand, "and I promise you that I will soon let you write a little letter to your papa. Come, Bun, dear, you are not going to be naughty, I am sure. Come along and we'll have such a nice quiet morning over our books;" and she held out her other hand to the little girl.

"Well, if I am good, will you read us a story after we have said our lessons?" bargained Miss Bunny; "I just love to hear you read stories."

"Yes, I will read you a very nice story if you are good, and I have a pretty box of chocolate here that I will give to the child

who studies the hardest and keeps silence the longest."

"Oh, how nice! Oh, how jolly!" cried Bunny, clapping her hands in delight. "I'll learn my lessons awfully hard;" and away she ran down the passage to the library, pulled her spelling-book out of the drawer, and perching herself on a chair at the table began to shout out the words at the top of her voice.

"My dear Bunny, how do you think Mervyn can learn his lessons if you scream yours out in that way?" said Miss Kerr laughing; "repeat those words quietly to yourself whilst I show your cousin what he is to do."

"I don't know very much, Miss Kerr," said Mervyn shyly as he took the book from her hand; "papa says I am a dreadful dunce, but I only began to learn last year."

"Never mind that, my dear boy. If you give your attention to your book and feel anxious to learn, you will soon get on. Spell over these words for me and let me see what you can do."

Mervyn did as he was told, and with much

difficulty he managed to spell down half a column of very easy words.

"Oh, I can do better than that! I can do better than that!" cried Bunny, wriggling about on her chair; "why, I could spell those words in a minute. Listen—h-o-u-s-e, d-a-y, m-o-u-s-e."

"Hush! Bunny, I cannot allow you to go on like that," said Miss Kerr gravely; "you have learned those words over and over again, so of course you know them well. Now, Mervyn, go and read them over by yourself and I will hear you say them without the book in a few minutes. Bunny, come and say your lesson."

The little girl slipped off her chair and came slowly across the room to Miss Kerr.

"Be quick, Bun, stir yourself," cried the governess; "I want to hear how beautifully you can spell words that you have never seen before; come along."

But Bunny still hung back with an obstinate look on her little face, that showed plainly how very unwilling she was to do as she was told.

"Come, dear child, be quick, you are

wasting all my time;" and Miss Kerr held out her hand for the spelling-book.

Bunny handed it to her, and then dragging one foot slowly after the other, she at last stood by Miss Kerr's side.

"Take your finger out of your mouth, Bunny," said the governess, as she laid the book before the child and pointed to the place. "Now begin, B—"

"If you please, Miss Kerr," said Ashton, opening the door, "Mrs. Dashwood wants to see you very particular, miss, in the drawing-room. She said as she wouldn't keep you long, but you was to go to her at once."

"Very well, I will go now, Ashton," said Miss Kerr; "and now, children, I hope you will be good while I am away. Bunny, you can go over those words by yourself. See here is the box of chocolate. I will put it in the middle of the table so that you may see what you have to work for;" and placing a pretty cardboard box upon a pile of books so that the children might see the gay picture on the lid, she smiled kindly upon them both, and hurried out of the room.

For a few moments after they were left alone the little people were very silent and quiet; but soon Bunny raised her head, yawned noisily, and pushing her book away began to amuse herself by looking about the room.

"I shall get the prize," said Mervyn, "you are not learning your lesson, you know."

"No more are you," cried Bunny; "I'll learn mine up in a minute when Miss Kerr comes back, and you're as slow as an old snail at yours;" and again she began to mimic his voice and manner of spelling.

"You're very rude," cried Mervyn, getting red, "and I'll just tell Miss Kerr when she comes back."

"Tell-tale! tell-tale!" sang Bunny; "much I care! If I know my lesson best I'll get the chocolate and I won't give you one bit."

"You're a greedy thing! But you won't get it. I know my lesson splendidly, and you don't know yours at all, so I am sure to get the prize, I can tell you."

"Ha, how grand you are, to be sure!" screamed Bunny, and stretching out her hand

she tried to pull the chocolate box towards her.

"You sha'n't touch it! You sha'n't touch it!" shouted Mervyn; "it isn't yours, so just leave it alone."

"It isn't yours either," cried Bunny with flaming cheeks, and she fastened her little fingers more firmly than ever round the box.

"I am sure to get it, so I shall keep it beside me till Miss Kerr comes back."

"No, you sha'n't," answered Mervyn in an angry voice, and jumping up on his chair he sprawled over the table and tried to drag the box from Bunny's hand.

"You nasty boy, let go! I'll tell Miss Kerr! I'll tell mama! You're a coward! You're a horrid—"

"Who's going to be tell-tale now?" shrieked the boy. "Give it to me, I say, give it to me," and he gave a vigorous pull at the box.

But the cardboard of which the chocolate box was composed was not strong enough to stand such pulling, and before the naughty children knew where they were it suddenly gave way and came to pieces in their hands. The beautiful prize was completely destroyed,

and its whole contents were strewn all over the place.

"Now, see what you have done!" cried Bunny, bursting into tears; "you have broken the box—oh dear, oh dear, you cross, nasty, greedy boy, I—"

"I didn't do it," said Mervyn, but his voice was low and shaky, for all his anger disappeared when he saw the pretty box torn to pieces and the chocolate creams lying scattered about all over the table and floor.

"Yes, you did! If you hadn't pulled so hard it would have been all right," said Bunny tearfully. "Oh, what will Miss Kerr say? I think I'll run away to the nursery and hide. I shall be afraid to let her see me—"

"That would be cowardly," answered Mervyn; "I'm very sorry I pulled the box, and I'll stay here and tell her so;" and he went down on his knees and began to gather up the sweetmeats and put them into a sheet of paper.

"Don't eat any, Mervyn," said Bunny, "they look awfully nice, but—"

"Eat them!" exclaimed the boy indig-

nantly, "I should think not indeed! I am not so mean as that; I wouldn't—"

"Mean—is it mean?" cried Bunny, rubbing her mouth; "oh, I didn't know, and I just took one—but Miss Kerr won't mind."

"Well, you are nasty! You tell me not to eat them, and then you go and take some yourself. Go away, I won't speak to you or be friends with you any more; you're a mean—"

"Oh, Mervyn, Mervyn, I'm so sorry! I'm so sorry!" cried Bunny, flinging herself on her knees beside her cousin. "I didn't want to take the chocolate cream, but it looked so nice, and I just longed to take it and—"

"Children! what are you doing?" cried Miss Kerr in astonishment as her eyes fell upon the two kneeling figures and she heard Bunny's miserable tone of voice; "why are you on the floor? Come back to the table at once."

"Bunny," whispered Mervyn, "we must tell Miss Kerr now what we have done;" and springing to his feet he caught the little girl by the hand and dragged her over to the other side of the room, where the governess

had seated herself, ready to begin lessons again.

"We have been very naughty," he began, looking down at the floor; "we didn't learn our lessons—and—we—broke—the box—and spilt all the chocolates—but we are very sorry, indeed we are," and he raised his blue eyes full of tears to Miss Kerr's face.

"Yes, we are very sorry—and—I eat a chocolate cream—but Mervyn didn't because it was mean," cried Bunny, and then, overcome with grief, she buried her face in her pinafore and sobbed aloud.

"I cannot tell you how much surprised and shocked I feel at such conduct," said Miss Kerr gravely. "I really thought I could trust you for a few minutes alone. Mervyn, I am very much grieved to think that you could behave in such a naughty way. Bunny is wild and giddy, but I thought you were going to show her a good example, by being good and gentle yourself."

"Yes, and I wanted to," said Mervyn, "but she called me names and then I got cross, and then—I—"

"Yes, and I got cross too," cried Bunny,

putting down her pinafore for a minute. "I was angry and—"

"And I am afraid you both forgot that God was looking at you, and that he was greatly displeased at you for giving way to your wicked passions in such a manner. How did you come to be so naughty? Mervyn, what began it all?"

The tears were rolling down the little boy's cheeks, but he dried them with his handkerchief, and choking back those that were still ready to flow, he tried to tell the story of the torn chocolate box as well as he could.

"Well, I am glad you have told me all about it," said Miss Kerr, gently, "and as you both seem so sorry for your conduct, I suppose I must forgive you. But remember, dear children, that you must tell God that you are sorry, and ask him to forgive you. Pray to Him that he may help you to overcome your tempers and become good, gentle little children. I will not scold you any more, and you have punished yourselves by breaking the box and spilling the sweetmeats, for now I cannot allow you to have any of them."

"Oh, I don't mind that!" cried Mervyn quickly. "If you will forgive me for being naughty, I don't want any sweets.

"I do forgive you, Mervyn, but don't forget what I told you. Say a prayer to-night before you go to bed and ask God's forgiveness and help."

"Yes, I will, I will," cried the boy, "and I will try and be ever so good all day to make up for being so naughty this morning."

"And I'll be good too," said Bunny; "I am sorry you won't give us any sweets, for they look so nice, but still I—"

"You won't ask for any! That is right, dear. I know you like sweets, Bun, but I must punish you a little, you know, so I can't give you any to-day. Come, now, I forgive you both, so let us go back to our lessons at once; and I hope you will do your best to show me that you are truly sorry, by working very hard for the next two hours."

"Yes, yes, we will, indeed," cried the children together, and off they ran to get their books.

"That is right! That looks like real work," said Miss Kerr, as she wrapped up

the chocolate creams in paper, and locked them away in a drawer. "Come, Bunny, bring your book to me, dear."

Bunny opened her spelling-book briskly, Mervyn began to read his lesson attentively, and perfect peace reigned once more.

CHAPTER X.

ON OLIVER'S MOUNT.

THE lessons were over about half-past one, and as they had been well learned and quickly said, Miss Kerr was really pleased with the children, and rewarded them for their industry and attention by reading a pretty story, that interested and amused them very much.

This kept them pleasantly occupied until nearly two o'clock, and then they ran off to the nursery in high spirits, to get themselves washed and dressed for their early dinner.

"I am so sorry, Miss Kerr," said Bunny, as she took her seat at the dinner-table, "I'm really dreadfully sorry that nice boy we saw yesterday has not come to have lunch with us as he promised he would."

"Yes, dear, so am I, for I should like very much to see him," answered Miss Kerr, "but I daresay the rain kept him from coming."

"But it's not raining one drop now," said Mervyn, "and I declare, there is the sun coming out; I do wish he would come."

"Oh, but it's wet under-foot, Mervyn," remarked Bunny wisely, "and it's a bad thing to get your feet wet—Sophie screams fearfully at me if I put my toe out, even long after the rain has stopped."

"Yes, when you go in your thin shoes, of course," cried Mervyn, "but big boys like Frank Collins are not afraid of wetting their feet. Are they, Miss Kerr?"

"No, I don't think they are, dear," answered the governess, laughing, "I know my brothers run out in all kinds of weather."

"Come in, my boy! Here they are at their dinner," said Mr. Dashwood, opening the door at this moment, and entering the room with young Collins. "Miss Kerr, this is our young friend who so bravely saved poor Bunny yesterday," he added as he presented Frank to the governess.

"I am very glad to see you, Master Collins,

and these children have been longing for you to come," said Miss Kerr; "it was very brave of you to stop the pony."

"Brave! not at all, Miss Kerr," answered Frank with a bright honest smile that won the lady's heart at once. "I don't think the pony was really running away, and if this little girl," and he patted Bunny on the head, "had not been frightened, but had sat up properly and kept a good hold of her reins, she would have been all right."

"Oh! Bunny, Bunny, you little coward," cried Miss Kerr; "and so, after all, it was you who held on by the mane, and not Mervyn, as you so gaily told him he would do yesterday."

"Did she tell him that?" asked Frank as he took a seat at the table beside Mervyn. "Well, I think this little chap would be the bravest of the two in real danger. He would not be so rash, perhaps, but I think he would keep cool and not lose his head as she did."

"Oh, but I was frightened," sighed Bunny. "I was sure Frisk was running away;" and she looked so very tearful that her papa

kindly changed the conversation by asking his young guest how he liked staying at Scarborough.

"Are there many nice walks about?" asked Mr. Dashwood, when they had all finished their lunch and were preparing to leave the table. "I mean short walks within easy distance, where these little folks could go, for instance?"

"Yes, there's the old castle," said Frank, "on the West Cliff, then there's the people's Park in the valley, which of course you all know well, and Oliver's Mount, which I think the nicest walk of any."

"Oliver's Mount! Oh, that is a nice place," said Bunny, who had quite recovered her gay spirits again. "Sophie says she went up there one day with some friends, and she had buns and lemonade and all kinds of things, in a little house, a funny small house, she says, that is up there on the top. Do take us up Oliver's Mount, like a dear good papa."

"Yes, I know the little house Sophie means," said Frank; "it is only a small shed, you can just see it from the window, look,

there it is, right away up on the top of the mount."

"It looks a great height, certainly," said Mr. Dashwood. "I wonder if these little ones could manage to go such a long way."

"Oh! yes, we could, we could," cried the children together.

"Very well, then, I suppose we had better set off at once," said Mr. Dashwood; "you have no objection to my taking these small people, Miss Kerr?"

"Not the slightest," she replied. "I was going to send them with Sophie, but I am sure they will enjoy going with you much better. Mrs. Dashwood is not well enough to go out, so I intend to read to her the best part of the afternoon."

"I am glad to hear that, for I was afraid she might feel dull if we set off for a long walk," said Mr. Dashwood. "Well, run away, children, and get ready; the sooner we start the better."

"It will be a long way for their little legs if we go right to the top," said Frank doubtfully. "Mervyn doesn't look very strong, and Bunny's legs are very short."

"Indeed they are not," cried Bunny indignantly. "I can walk splendidly; can't I, Miss Kerr?"

"Yes, dear, you are a very good walker for your age and size."

"There, do you hear that?" cried Bunny, jumping off her chair and throwing her arms round her father's neck. "Do take us, do take us, dear darling old papa."

"You little rogue!" cried Mr. Dashwood, "I do believe you could coax the birds off the bushes."

"No, papa, indeed I couldn't," answered Bunny gravely; "I often tried, but they would not come; and I tried to put salt on their tails too, but they flew away and—"

"You dear little goose, that was a great shame; they must have been very rude birds indeed, my poor Bun," said Mr. Dashwood with a hearty laugh at the child's simplicity. "You have coaxed me anyway, dear. I will take you to Oliver's Mount; and I have thought of a plan that will save your short legs and Mervyn's weak ones a good deal."

"A plan! Oh! what is it? you dear, darling papa," she cried joyfully

"No, I won't tell you, little one. Run off and get dressed, and you will see what it is when you come back. Away you go!—both of you. Be quick, or Frank and I will not wait for you."

Bunny and Mervyn were both very curious to know what this wonderful plan of Mr. Dashwood's could be, and chattered away about it as they were being dressed by Sophie

"To the top of Oliver's Mount!" cried the maid, holding up her hands in astonishment when the children told her where they were going. "Gracious! is it that monsieur your papa knows how far it is? You will both be too tired to return home to-night."

"Then we shall sleep in that little house at the top, among the buns and the lemonade," said Mervyn. "That would be fine fun, wouldn't it, Bunny?"

"I don't know about that," replied the little girl. "But do not be frightened, Sophie; papa has a fine plan, so we sha'n't be one bit tired. Come on, Mervyn," and, laughing merrily, the two children ran off together down-stairs."

"Papa, papa! where is your plan?" cried Bunny, as they met her father and young Collins in the hall. "We do so want to know what your wonderful plan can be."

"Here it is, then, my dear," said Mr. Dashwood, and he threw open the door, and displayed two steady-looking old donkeys standing ready saddled at the gate. "You are to ride one of those fellows, and Mervyn the other. That is my plan; isn't it a good one?"

"Capital! capital! What fun! what fun!" cried the children, clapping their hands in delight. "But, papa, the donkeys will never go up the mountain," exclaimed Bunny suddenly; "Sophie says there is a big stile to get over, so how will they manage that?"

"We won't ask them to go over the stile," said Frank Collins, as he lifted the little girl and seated her comfortably on the saddle.

"They will carry you up the road to the foot of the Mount, and then we will leave them there to rest and eat some grass, while we go on our rambles up to the top."

"Wasn't it a capital plan of papa's, Mervyn, to get us these donkeys?" asked Bunny,

as she and her cousin jogged quietly along the road on the steady old animals. "These are such nice well-behaved creatures, and don't run away in a hurry like Master Frisk."

"No, I should think not," answered Mervyn laughing. "Why, just look at this fellow," he cried as his donkey came to a sudden stand-still in the middle of the road. "What can we do to make him go on? Here, boy, please make him move a little," he shouted to the donkey-boy, who was loitering behind talking to a comrade.

"Hey up!" screamed the lad, running up quietly from behind, and bringing his stick down heavily on the poor brute's back; "hey up, Teddy!" and away trotted the donkey at a rapid pace up the hill.

When Bunny's charger saw his companion starting off so gaily, he pricked up his ears and followed him as fast as ever he could.

"Your plan was a capital one, uncle," said Mervyn, as he and Bunny jumped off their donkeys and prepared themselves to climb over the stile and begin their walk up the mount together.

"I suppose you feel as fresh as a couple of

daisies, and not at all shaken?" said Frank Collins. "Come along and we'll have a race to the very top;" and away he ran nimbly up the side of the hill.

Bunny and Mervyn struggled bravely after him, and they went so fast that they soon left Mr. Dashwood behind them, for he declared that he was too old to run, and that he would follow them at his leisure.

The grass was very slippery after the rain, and the mount was very steep, and so, although the children went as fast as their little legs could carry them, yet they could not keep up with their young friend, who soon appeared a long way above them, waving a handkerchief, and cheering and shouting at the top of his voice. But at last they all reached the highest part of the mount, and, puffing and panting after their fearful exertions, they seated themselves upon a bench and gazed about them in delight.

"Isn't it jolly up here, Mr. Dashwood?" said Frank. "I think it would be worth climbing ever so much higher to see such a sight, don't you?"

"Yes, indeed I do," answered Mr. Dash-

wood; "and the air is very fine; it feels so fresh and strong. That is the old castle away over there, I suppose."

"Yes; and doesn't the old part of the town, with its queer red brick houses and narrow streets, look pretty? And look at the bay in front of it, with its ships and barges. Doesn't it all look lovely in the sunlight?"

"Yes, Frank, it does look pretty," cried Mervyn; "and isn't the sea a beautiful blue colour?"

"And don't our donkeys look funny little gray fellows, away down there on the road?" cried Bunny. "Oh, dear! they do look far away."

"Bunny would rather look at her donkey than all the beauties of the country," said Mr. Dashwood with a smile, as he took his little girl upon his knee. "But these youngsters must not be defrauded of their cakes and lemonade, Frank. Would you mind going into that wonderful shop to see if you can get some?"

"Oh! they have lots of good things in there, I know," answered Frank. "I hope

you will be able to eat a good supply, Bunny?"

"Yes, I feel able to eat several cakes," cried Bunny; "thank you, dear papa, for thinking of them. I do love buns and lemonade. Don't you, Mervyn?"

"Yes, Bunny, very much," replied her cousin.

"I am afraid I shall get scolded for letting you have them," said Mr. Dashwood, as Frank appeared, carrying an armful of cakes and buns, and followed by a man with glasses and bottles of lemonade.

"If you eat all these you won't be able to take anything at tea, and then Miss Kerr will be so dreadfully angry."

"Oh! never mind, papa, dear," cried Bunny; "cakes and lemonade are just as good as tea, but I will eat as much as ever I can when I go home, and then no one will scold you."

"That's a good, kind little woman," said her father laughing; "but finish up those cakes now as fast as you can, for I want to get back to the club for an hour before dinner."

"I will just put this in my pocket for the

donkey-boy, papa," said the little girl, holding up a bun which she could not manage to eat; "he was very good, and made the donkeys go so well."

"I think we will go round by the road, Frank," said Mr. Dashwood, rising from the bench; "it is not quite so steep as the mount, and is very little longer."

"Very well; I daresay it will be the best way to return; it will be a variety anyway," said Frank. "Mervyn, will you walk with me? I want to talk to you about India and all our friends there."

"Yes, yes," said the little boy, "that is the very thing I should like."

"But our donkeys—oh! are we not going home on our donkeys?" cried Bunny.

"Of course we are, you little grumbler," said her father. "We are only going to walk round by the road to them instead of tumbling pell-mell down the hill again. Come along with me, and let these two boys talk over their affairs together."

Then, taking his little girl by the hand, Mr. Dashwood walked quickly away with her down the hilly road. Frank and Mervyn

followed them slowly arm-in-arm, and the elder boy, with a look of yearning love in his eyes, asked his small friend many anxious questions about the dear father and mother whom he had not seen for such a long time.

CHAPTER XI.

WAS IT CRUEL?

ONE lovely afternoon towards the end of September Mrs. Dashwood and Miss Kerr sat together on the lawn in front of the house. They were stitching away at some pretty clothes, that were evidently intended for a large wax doll, with golden ringlets and blue eyes, that lay on a table that stood between them on the grass.

Mrs. Dashwood looked pale and delicate still, but there was a well-pleased smile upon her sweet face as she sat enjoying the sea breezes. She was comfortably propped up with pillows in a large wicker chair, and her thin white fingers were busily engaged on

her dainty work. The fresh country air had done her great service, and she was full of the hope that she should soon return quite strong and well to town.

Bunny lay curled up in another big chair, and although she knew very well that the pretty doll was intended for her, she looked very cross and did not seem to notice what was going on about her.

"Why don't you go and play, Bunny?' said Miss Kerr looking up from her work. "I do not like to see you tumbling about there with such a cross look on your face. Go and get a book—or will you have a needle and thread and try to do some sewing?"

"No, thank you," answered Bunny, "I hate books and I can't sew."

"But you might learn, dear," said her mother gently. "It is a great pleasure to be able to sew, Bunny. I quite enjoy doing my piece of work after being obliged to lie on the sofa for such a long time."

"I don't want to learn to sew," cried Bunny. "I want to have a game. I am tired sitting here, mama. Oh, I do wish

Mervyn and Frank would be quick and come back."

"Well, my dear Bunny, they will soon be here," said Miss Kerr. "They promised to be back at three and it wants a quarter to three now, so you won't have very long to wait."

"Oh! I'm so glad!" cried Bunny; "I've spent such a nasty dull day without them."

"Well, really now!" said her mother laughing; "that's a kind thing to say. I thought my little girl liked being with me."

"Oh! yes, mama, so I do," answered Bunny quickly; "but Mervyn has been away such a long time, and I do want him to come back and have a good game with me. He stayed to lunch with Frank up there at the hotel, and Miss Kerr wouldn't let me go, and oh, dear! I have been so lonely all day."

"Poor little girl!" said her mother, "but Miss Kerr was quite right not to let you go, Bunny; Frank will have quite enough to do to manage Mervyn. You are very hard to keep in order, for you are very wild and—"

'Oh! I'm not a bit wild now, mama; I'm as quiet as a lamb—I am indeed."

"Bunny, Bunny, where are you, I say?—where are you?" called Mervyn, running up the garden walk and across the lawn.

"Here I am, Mervyn, and oh! I am so glad you have come back," and the little girl rushed forward eagerly to meet her cousin. "But where is Frank? I thought he was coming back with you."

"Yes, so he is. He will be here in a minute; and he has something for you, Bunny."

"Something for me, Mervyn; oh! what is it?" she cried; "do tell me what it is."

"He'll tell you himself—he'll tell you himself," answered Mervyn, and going down on the grass, he tumbled heels over head two or three times in succession.

"You tiresome boy," cried his cousin, "do get up and tell me what Frank has for me, and where he got it, and—"

"Go and ask Frank himself—there he is," shouted Mervyn, starting quickly to his feet again, as young Collins appeared suddenly at the top of the flight of steps that led from

the drawing-room into the garden. His hands were both behind his back, and he laughed merrily when he saw Bunny's face of excitement and curiosity as she ran across the lawn to meet him.

"You dear good Frank, Mervyn says you have something for me," she cried; "do tell me what it is. I do so want to know."

"A bird, Bunny; a young thrush," said Frank gaily, as he drew a small cage from behind his back and held it up to the little girl. "I put him in here because it was the only thing I could find; but I will get you a proper big cage for him to-morrow."

"Oh! never mind the cage; but let me see the bird," cried Bunny.

"He is rather frightened just now, Bun, but I think he will soon sit up and begin to sing; and thrushes do sing beautifully."

"He is a dear little fellow! a perfect darling! But where did you get him, Frank?" asked Bunny in delight, as she danced joyfully round her new treasure. "Did you manage to put salt on his tail?"

"He hasn't got a tail, Bunny," answered Frank, laughing; "he is so young that he

hasn't got one yet. I caught him quite easily in the hotel garden."

"Mama, Miss Kerr, look at the lovely bird Frank has brought me," cried Bunny, running back to her mother's chair.

"A bird, Frank?" said Mrs. Dashwood, looking into the cage in surprise. "What a pity it was to catch him and put him in prison, poor little creature; he looks dreadfully frightened."

"In prison, mama!" cried Bunny indignantly. "Why, it's a lovely cage; and see, he has water, and hard-boiled egg, and bread sopped in water, and—"

"Yes, dear, I see all those things, but still he is in prison, Bunny," said Mrs. Dashwood gently, "and I think it would have been much kinder to have left him to fly about the woods and sing his sweet songs in happy freedom."

"I am afraid he will never sing again," said Miss Kerr as Frank placed the cage on the table beside her; "he looks as if he were going to die, I think; just see how he has gathered himself up into a ball, and his eyes are shut."

"Oh! I hope he won't die," cried Frank; "I am sorry I caught him, Mrs. Dashwood. Shall I let him fly away again?"

"No, you sha'n't, Frank; he is my bird, and you must not let him fly away," cried Bunny; "I want to keep him."

"But, Bunny, your mama thinks he would be glad to get away, so I would rather let him go. Do say I may send him off."

"No, no, Frank, you sha'n't; I want him; he's mine now," answered the little girl in an angry voice; "I will have him and keep him;" and making a dive across the table she seized the cage and ran away with it down the garden.

"Bunny! Bunny! come back this minute," cried her mother and Miss Kerr together.

"I'll soon bring her back!" exclaimed Frank, and off he went after the runaway.

When Bunny heard footsteps behind her she turned her head to see who it was that was following her, and as she ran along without looking where she was going, her foot came against a stone, and down she went, cage and all, upon the gravelled path.

"Oh, you cruel big boy!" she cried, bursting into tears. "Why did you come after me and make me fall in that way? I'll never speak to you again—never;" and, gathering herself up from the ground, she began to rub her knees, and brush the dust and sand off her frock.

"Now, don't be silly, Bunny," said Frank, as he picked up the cage. "You are not a bit hurt—but, look here! I believe you have killed the poor bird."

"Oh! no, Frank, dear! oh! I didn't do that!" sobbed the little girl, coming forward and looking wistfully into the cage.

"Yes, I am afraid he is dead. He was very much frightened before," said Frank sadly, "and the shock of the fall, and all the water and things falling on him have killed him. I am so sorry. I wish, now, I had left him to sing happily in the garden, Mrs. Dashwood," he said, going back to where the ladies sat together, carrying the poor dead thrush in his hand. "You were quite right; it was a great pity to take the poor bird and put him in a cage. I will never catch a young bird again—never."

"Poor little creature! I thought it would not live long," said Miss Kerr; "but, Bunny, you were very naughty to run away with it in that away; I am sure the fall helped to kill the thrush."

"I didn't mean to kill it!" cried Bunny in a choking voice. "Oh! mama, I am so sorry!" and she flung herself on the ground beside her mother's chair, and buried her face in her lap.

"Never mind, Bunny, dear," whispered Mervyn softly, as he stole up and put his arm round her neck. "Don't cry, dear; I am sure it would have died very soon anyway. Wouldn't it, Miss Kerr?"

"Yes, dear, I think it would," said the governess gently. "But what are you going to do with the thrush, Frank?"

"Oh! I suppose I must bury it," answered Frank; "I wish I had a pretty box to put it in."

"I have one, I have one," cried Bunny, jumping quickly to her feet, and running off towards the house, mopping up her tears as she went along. "I've got a dear little one that will just do, Frank."

"We must have a solemn funeral," said young Collins. "Who will write an epitaph to put at the head of his grave?"

"An epee—what, Frank?" asked Mervyn, with a puzzled look on his little face. "What do you mean?"

"An epitaph, you little simple Indian; do you not know what that means?"

"No," said Mervyn gravely, "I don't think people in India ever have such things."

"Don't they indeed! Bunny, what is an epitaph?" asked Frank, laughing merrily as he took a pretty bon-bon box from the little girl's hand.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Bunny; "I never heard of such a thing. What is it yourself?"

"Well, you are a clever pair! Why, it's something written on a tombstone," cried Frank, and, taking a piece of paper out of his pocket, he scribbled a few words, and then proceeded to read them aloud. "Listen and learn what an epitaph is, my friends:—

"Beneath there lies a little thrush,
Who should have sung on many a bush."

"Capital!" said Miss Kerr, laughing merrily at this brilliant production. "Why, you are a regular poet!"

"It is very good indeed, Frank," said Mrs. Dashwood with a bright smile. "Now, Mervyn, I hope you know what an epitaph is?"

"Yes, I think so," said Mervyn slowly; "but no one says bush like thrush. It doesn't sound at all right."

"Hallo! young Indian, are you going to find fault with my pronunciation? Isn't it splendid, Miss Bun, bun?"

"I'm not bun, bun, and I think Mervyn is quite right," answered the little girl with a toss of her head. "It sounds very funny, and all that, but it isn't the proper way to say the word, I know."

"Of course not, little Miss Wisehead, but we are allowed to say all kinds of things in poetry," said Frank grandly; "and I can tell you it's jolly convenient when a fellow wants a rhyme. But now that we have decided this knotty point, let us go and look for a nice place where we can bury the little fellow;" and, having placed the thrush in the

box, he went off to look for a suitable burying-place.

"Put him in my little garden," cried Bunny eagerly. "There are lovely flowers there, and we can make him such a nice grave."

"Where is your garden, monkey?" said Frank. "I did not know you had such a thing."

"Yes, I have; at least I call it mine," answered Bunny, skipping gaily along. "It's a dear little flower-bed down there by the sun-dial, and it will be such a pretty place for the poor dead bird. Do bury him there, Frank."

"Very well; what pleases you pleases me," and off they went to Bunny's garden.

Very carefully Frank dug up the earth, and, having placed the bird within the grave, he filled it in neatly, took a lovely geranium from a neighbouring flower-bed, and planted it just over the poor songster's head.

"We must water it," cried Bunny, "or it will not grow," and away she rushed to the tool-house. Here she found the gardener's

watering-pot, and, unfortunately for them all, it was more than half-full of water.

"This will make the flowers grow beautifully," she cried; and before the boys had time to speak or stop her hand, she tilted up the heavy pot and sent the water flying all over their feet and legs.

"Oh! Bunny, Bunny! just see what you have done," exclaimed Mervyn, beginning to cry as he felt the cold water soaking in through his stockings and shoes. "Oh, dear! what shall I do?"

"You little mischief!" cried Frank, shaking himself. What on earth made you do that?"

"Oh! I wanted the flower to grow," said Bunny, bursting into tears, "and I did not mean to wet you and Mervyn at all; and look at my own pinafore and frock. Oh, dear! what will Sophie say?"

"Sophie will say you are a naughty, wicked little creature," cried the maid, darting out suddenly from behind a tree "Come in this minute and get your things changed. Monsieur Mervyn, go to the nursery at once."

"I won't go! I won't go a bit!" cried Bunny, stamping her foot angrily. "The sun will dry me in a minute, and I won't go with you; so there!"

"Come along, Bunny, like a good girl," said Mervyn, "let us run fast and see who will get up to the nursery first," and away he went up the path as fast as he could.

"I won't go, Sophie. I want to stay with Frank," cried Bunny once more, as she caught the boy's hand and held on to it tightly.

"You ought to go, dear, indeed you ought," said Frank. "See, Mervyn has gone, and you know you should always do what Sophie tells you."

"No, I won't; she's a nasty thing! and it's twice as nice out here, so I won't go one bit."

"Your mama and Miss Kerr have returned to the house, and you must come in and get changed your dress, mademoiselle."

"I won't! I won't," shrieked Bunny, clinging more closely to Frank, and turning her back upon her nurse in a most impertinent manner.

"We shall see if you do not, you bad,

naughty child," cried Sophie in an angry voice, and running forward she seized the little girl in her arms, and carried her off screaming and kicking into the house.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIREWORKS.

A LITTLE before seven o'clock that evening the children stood at the drawing-room window. All traces of the recent struggle in the garden had been removed, and in the neat little girl in the dainty cream lace and muslin frock, with its fluttering pink ribbons, few persons would have recognized the small fury that Sophie had carried off wriggling and crying to the nursery a few hours before.

But Miss Bunny had already forgotten that such a scene had ever taken place, and was making very merry over a big blue-bottle fly that she and Mervyn were doing their best to catch as it walked up and down the window-pane.

Frank Collins sat at the piano playing some very lively tunes, and from time to time Bunny would pause in her pursuit of the fly and dance lightly over the floor in time to the music.

"Papa, papa," she cried, as Mr. Dashwood entered the room with his wife upon his arm, "doesn't Frank make lovely tunes?"

"I don't know, dear," answered her father. "Frank does not seem anxious to let me hear his music, for he has stopped short the moment I appeared."

"I am afraid Mrs. Dashwood would not care for my music," answered Frank modestly. "I only play from ear."

"Oh, Frank, how can you say such a thing!" cried Bunny indignantly. "Why, mama, he plays just like Miss Kerr does. He plays away up in the treble with two hands, and then he plays pum, pum, pum away down in the bass; oh, it is most beautiful! Do play again, Frank."

"No, dear, not now," said Frank. "I'll play for you another time, but don't ask me now;" and he hopped the little girl up on his knee.

"Well, then, ask—you know what," whis-

pered Bunny mysteriously. "You know you said you would—you promised."

"Oh, yes, of course; I very nearly forgot," said Frank, "and I suppose Sophie will soon be carrying you off to bed, it's nearly half-past seven."

"Yes, she will, unless you ask that, and papa and mama say, Yes."

"Mrs. Dashwood," said Frank, "it's a gala night, as they call it, on the Spa, and there are to be fireworks, so will you let these little people stay up for them? Please do."

"What! to go out in the night air and into the crowd?" asked Mrs. Dashwood in a horrified voice. "My dear Frank, I could not think of allowing such a thing. It is quite impossible!"

"Of course it is, Mrs. Dashwood," answered Frank. "But I did not mean them to go out at all, I—"

"Oh, no, dear mama," cried Bunny eagerly, "Frank does not want us to go out, but to sit up and see them from Miss Kerr's window, that is all."

"Bunny, come here, dear, I want to have a talk with you," said her mother gravely,

and guessing that she was going to receive a scolding for her naughty conduct in the garden, the child stole slowly over the floor, and at last stood in rather a shamefaced manner beside her mother's chair.

"Do you think, Bunny, that a little girl who screamed and kicked as you did when Sophie took you in out of the garden, deserves to be allowed to stay up to see the fireworks?"

"No, mama," answered Bunny in a low voice, and two large tears trickled down her cheeks and fell on her mother's hand.

"Auntie, dear, don't scold poor Bunny, for she is very sorry she was naughty, and she begged Sophie's pardon before we came down."

"Well, I am glad to hear that, Mervyn," said Mrs. Dashwood, "and I hope Bunny is sorry; but I don't think she should be allowed to stay up to see the fireworks, she cannot expect it."

"Why, mama, what is all this about?" said Mr. Dashwood, coming over and putting his arm round his little daughter. "Why are you scolding poor Bunny so much?"

"Because I was naughty, papa," said Bunny, creeping up very close to him. "But

I am very sorry, and I promise to be good."

"Oh, well, don't scold her any more, dear," said her papa, stroking the little golden head, "she can't do more than promise to be a good child."

"And do forgive her, and let her stay up to see the fireworks," whispered Mervyn, "it would be such fun!"

"What is that you are saying, Mervyn? What dreadful plot are you hatching over there?" cried Mr. Dashwood, "why, the fireworks don't go off until nine, and your bedtime is at half-past seven, isn't it?"

"Yes, I know it is, uncle, but we're not a bit sleepy, and we never saw any fireworks, and this is the last gala night before we leave Scarborough, and—"

"My dear Mervyn, what a string of reasons!" cried his uncle laughing; "after such a list, I think we must surely grant your request. That is, if mama will forgive this poor culprit, and allow her to stay up."

"Well, as she is sorry, and as Mervyn says it is the last night, perhaps—"

"That's right! that's right!" said her hus-

band, "and now let us go in to dinner. This animated discussion has given me quite an appetite."

And as Ashton at this moment threw open the door, and announced that dinner was served, Mr. Dashwood offered his arm to his wife, and led her away to the dining-room.

"What fun! what fun! to be allowed to stay up to see the fireworks," cried Bunny, and catching hold of Frank's arm she hurried him off after her papa and mama.

"Now, you must sit quiet, children," said Mrs. Dashwood; "if you make a noise I shall have to send you away to the nursery."

"We'll be as quiet as mice," said Bunny, and pulling Mervyn down on a large woolly mat in the middle window, she began to whisper joyfully about the treat that was in store for them before the evening was over.

The first part of the dinner seemed rather long to the two little ones in their corner, but when at last the dessert was placed on the table, and Bunny was seated at her papa's elbow, and Mervyn between his aunt and his dear friend Frank, they all became so merry

together, that the fireworks were for the time completely forgotten.

"Oh, papa, I heard such a funny noise just now," cried Bunny suddenly, "what can it be? Listen, there it is again—whizz—whizz—"

"It's the first rocket, I'm sure!" exclaimed Frank, dropping the nut-crackers, "let us go off to a window somewhere, for I am sure the fireworks are going to begin."

"How jolly!" cried Mervyn. "Aunt, may we run up to Miss Kerr's room?"

"Can't we see them from here?" asked Mr. Dashwood, pulling up the blind and looking out. "What a beautiful dark night it is! Better stay here, chicks, I think. See, there goes another rocket!"

"Oh, that is lovely!" cried Bunny, clapping her hands. "But, papa, dear, we can see them much better from Miss Kerr's room, she has such a nice balcony, and she promised to let us go up to it if mama would allow us."

"Very well, then, away you go," said her father; "but be quick, or you will lose all the fun."

"Be sure and wrap yourselves up, dear

children, if you go out into the balcony," said Mrs. Dashwood. "The night air is very sharp."

"Oh, yes, mama, we will make ourselves as warm as toast," cried Bunny gaily. "Come, Frank, do come up to the balcony with us."

"All right, little woman, jump upon my back and we'll run a race with Mervyn."

Very much delighted at such an invitation, Bunny sprang from a chair on to Frank's back, and away they went galloping madly after Mervyn, up the stairs and along the passage to Miss Kerr's room. There they found Sophie waiting for them, heavily laden with cloaks and shawls in which she insisted on wrapping them up till they were nearly smothered, and shrieked wildly for just one little space through which they might manage to breathe.

"Very well, you will all catch your deaths of colds," cried Sophie. "Miss Bunny, you will want the doctor to-morrow, I am quite sure;" and she flounced out of the room and banged the door after her.

"Good riddance to bad rubbish!" cried Frank, laughing, as he released poor Mervyn's

face from the thick shawl in which the maid had rolled him up. "She's an awful scold that Sophie."

"But she's jolly kind to us sometimes," said Mervyn stoutly; "and we torment her dreadfully, don't we, Bunny?"

"Yes, we do indeed," answered the little girl; "and she doesn't always scold, Master Frank."

"Goodness me! don't be so indignant," cried Frank. "I meant no offence. I daresay Sophie is a regular angel."

"She's not quite that," said Miss Kerr as she opened the window and let the young people out upon the balcony. "But I am glad to hear the children stand up for her, for, as Mervyn says, they do torment her, and still she is very good-natured and kind to them on the whole."

"Yes, indeed she is," said Mervyn; "but oh! just look at that, isn't it exquisite?"

"Lovely!" cried Frank. "It's a regular shower of golden hail! But I think I like the Roman candles best. Look, Bunny, there's one—see—those two stars—watch how they change colour—first they're red—then blue—then—"

"Oh, yes, yes," cried Bunny dancing about. "There they go, right away over the sea! What lovely things fireworks are!"

"It is a pity we could not have gone down on the Spa to see the set pieces," said Frank. "I believe they are most beautiful. But then the crowd is something dreadful."

"Do they send the fireworks up from the Spa?" asked Mervyn; "they look just as if they were coming from the road up there in front of the Crown Hotel."

"No, they are sent from a place just over the Spa, up among the trees there, but a long way below the hotel."

"Oh dear! there goes a splendid rocket," cried Mervyn, "and doesn't it make a lovely noise?"

"Oh! I can't bear the noise," said Bunny, putting her fingers in her ears, "it makes me jump."

"Now that is really charming!" said Miss Kerr, as the whole bay with its ships and boats was suddenly illuminated by a brilliant crimson light. "How lovely everything looks in that soft, rich colour!"

"Oh! and I declare you can see Oliver's

Mount and the dear little cake shop," cried Bunny. "And, Mervyn, I wonder where our old donkeys are to-night," and she peered away out in the direction of the sands where the poor animals usually spent their days.

"At home in their beds, my dear," said Miss Kerr laughing, "and that's where small people like you should be; it must be near ten o'clock."

"Oh! not yet, not yet," cried the children; "we must stay and see the last of the fireworks!"

"That is the last now, I'm sure," said Frank. "That thick yellow light comes from the grand finale, which we cannot see —ha! there goes another rocket. Hurrah! the whole thing is at an end."

"Very well, my dears, you must say good-night," said Miss Kerr; "your poor little eyes are positively blinking with sleep, Bunny, dear."

"No, they're not," said the little girl, "but they feel funny and won't go quite straight."

"Are you getting a squint, then?" said Frank. "Come along, old lady, a few hours' sleep will make them go straight enough;"

and putting one arm round Bunny and the other round Mervyn, he marched them off to the nursery, where he deposited them one after the other on their little beds.

The children were really quite tired out with excitement, and the fatigue of sitting up to such an unusually late hour; so when Frank left them for the night, they did not utter a word or make a complaint. They said their prayers, were undressed at once, and, laying their weary heads upon their pillows, were soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER XIII.

QUIET TIMES.

IT is to be hoped that you see some improvement in Bunny's behaviour since you first made her acquaintance, though she was very naughty on the day when the poor thrush was killed.

At all events she had been trying to be good, and when she failed, or forgot her good resolutions she was so willing to confess her faults, and was so truly sorry for them, that Miss Kerr and Mama, and even Sophie, were always ready to forgive her. Miss Kerr had quite won Bunny's heart by her constant love and gentleness, so that the child could not bear to give her pain. This made Bunny more thoughtful, and she soon learned

to check her outbreaks of temper and to keep out of mischief.

Mervyn, who was growing tall and strong, was very much in earnest when he had promised to try to be docile and obedient. He did not forget that should he meet his dear mother and father in London they would ask him whether he had kept his word, and he would not have told them a falsehood even if he had been ever so naughty, for he was a truthful boy, and not at all a coward.

Mervyn often helped Bunny to remember her promises too; and it seemed as though after the night when they had seen the display of fireworks they had both made up their minds to go on steadily with their lessons every morning. Miss Kerr was delighted, and Sophie had really very little to do, for all the afternoon, and sometimes in the evening also, they were out on the sands, or on the hills, or seated in the garden. The reason of this was, that as Mr. Dashwood had given them notice that the holiday was coming to an end, they had implored their friend Frank Collins to come often to see them, and as he loved Mervyn and could talk to him about

his dear father and mother, and listen to his descriptions of life in Madras and Calcutta, he used to come every day to take the children out.

Of this Mr. Dashwood was very glad, for he was pleased that such a nice manly boy as Frank should give up so much time to these two young ones, and used to laugh at Miss Kerr and tell her that they learnt more from their young tutor Frank Collins than they did from their governess. Miss Kerr often made one of the party when they went out together and she used to like to listen to Frank too. He had been to a large school, and was now only waiting for his parents to return from India before going to another. He had read a great many books, and could remember several stories and accounts of voyages and discoveries.

The children would sit under a tree or inside an old boat on the beach and listen to him as he told them of the adventures of sailors and travellers; or sometimes they went with him for a ramble in the country, and he could show them the different kinds of trees and wild flowers, and point

out where the various birds built their nests.

Mervyn was quite surprised one day when a lark sprang suddenly from a field of long grass and went soaring up and up in the clear sunshine till it looked only like a speck, and at last could scarcely be seen, but yet all the time kept trilling and singing its beautiful song.

As it sung it floated away to some distance from the place from which it rose, and then suddenly it seemed to sink from the air and to drop amidst the grass again.

"Wherever has it gone to?" said Bunny; "there are no trees here, and where can its nest be?"

"Its nest is on the ground, in the long grass of the field," said Frank.

"Oh then, it has just dropped into it," cried Mervyn; "couldn't we go and see?"

"You wouldn't find it except you could trace the way to the spot where the bird first rose," said Frank. "Directly the artful fellow heard us coming he sprang out and started his song so that he might lead us away from the spot where the nest is, and now he has dropped

in the grass a long way off to lead us still further away.

"Oh *do* let us go and look for it!" said Bunny.

"I think we'd better not," said Mervyn; "remember the thrush, Bunny, and we might kill some of the little birds."

"Quite right, Mervyn," said Frank Collins; "we should very likely step upon it or frighten the hen bird so much that she would leave the nest. It would be like somebody coming and driving us away from home, you know. When I was as young as you are, I used to rob the nests of their eggs, but I have left off doing so now, and even if you should ever collect eggs you should only take one from a nest and contrive not to frighten the birds. But there are young larks and not eggs in this nest, so we will let them alone to grow strong and fly out into the sunshine and sing under the blue sky, won't we, Bunny?"

You may well believe that the children thought the last part of their holiday was the pleasantest of all; for beside Frank they had found another playmate, a great friend of his.

His name was Captain, and he was a grand, black, curly, Newfoundland dog. Such a fine fellow was seldom to be seen, and he learnt to lie down in a patch of grass on the hill, just at the place where he could watch for Bunny and Mervyn when they went out for their afternoon walk.

He would pretend to be asleep, and when they came quite close to him would spring up and begin to leap about, leading the way to the sands, and barking or rolling over and over till Frank or Mervyn threw a stick as far as ever they could into the sea that he might dash in after it and fetch it out.

Captain was a splendid swimmer, and had once jumped into the sea from the end of a pier after a little girl who had fallen into the water. The child would have been drowned, but Captain seized her by the frock and held her up till a boat could put out and fetch her, and then the brave fellow turned and swam ashore.

CHAPTER XIV.

BUNNY'S IMPROVEMENT. HOME AGAIN.

THE time had arrived when the holiday at Scarborough was to come to an end. The last evening was spent on the cliff. It was while they were all sitting on the hill-side looking out to sea that Frank began to talk to them about "lighthouses," those tall buildings, having a strong lantern at the top, the bright light from which can be seen far out at sea, so that sailors may know to what part of the coast they are going, and may steer their ships in such a direction as to avoid danger, or guide them into a place of safety.

Then Miss Kerr told them a story about a lighthouse, and how a brave and thoughtful little girl was able to save a great ship

from being dashed to pieces on the rocks. This lighthouse was at a very dangerous part of the coast, and every day the lamps had to be cleaned and fresh oil put in them, and the great metal "reflectors" that were behind the lamps and threw the light far out to sea had to be burnished.

The little girl was the child of the keeper of the lighthouse, and he often took her with him to stay there. He had a companion, for in lighthouses there are mostly two men; but one day this companion slipped off the ladder up which he had to climb to light the lamps in the great lantern, and broke his leg. At the same time he struck his head and became insensible, and so the father of the little girl was obliged to leave her and to fetch a doctor. He meant to come back very soon, but the doctor was out, and in trying to find him he was away for many hours, and by the time he could get down to his boat a great storm had come on, and the waves were breaking over the shore so that he could not put out to sea again.

Night was coming on, and the poor fellow paced the beach and wondered what was to

be done, for it would soon be time for the lamps to be lighted, and there was nobody in the lighthouse but the helpless man and his little girl. The sailors and fishermen all came round, but it would have been a desperate venture to put out a boat in such a storm, and with the great waves roaring and leaping on a long sharp ridge of rocks quite close to where the lighthouse stood, nobody could have expected to reach it alive.

At last, just as the night was coming on, the poor fellow prepared to risk his life rather than leave the ships that might be far off at sea without a guide or a warning; but six strong men dragged a large boat down to the edge of the shore where the waves were lowest, and agreed to share his danger. Their hands were on the boat ready to push her in and then scramble to their places; an old fisherman was in his seat ready to steer, when he suddenly gave a shout and pointed towards the lighthouse.

There from the lantern high above the roaring waves shone the brilliant beams of the lamps, and with a hearty cheer the brave fellows drew the boat back, and shading

their eyes with their hands stared as though they had never seen the familiar light before.

All night long they watched, till at break of day the storm abated, the sea grew still, and far far away they could see a great three-masted ship rolling and tossing, with one of her sails blown to rags, but still keeping off the shore. The pilot had seen the lights, and so knowing how to steer had kept her away from the rocky reefs where she might have been dashed to pieces.

It was not till the sun rose high and they were able to go out in their boats that the men on shore could take the doctor to the lighthouse, and then they found the little girl kneeling beside the injured man and feeding him with some cold tea which had been left in the teapot. He had come to his senses, and had tried to crawl to the ladder, when he heard her voice singing softly right up in the lantern. He contrived to drag himself along the floor of the room, and could just see a gleam from one of the lamps coming through the chinks of the wood-work. The child, when she found her father did not return, had grown afraid; but her great fear

was that the lamps would not be lighted, and as the place grew dark she made up her mind to try to light them herself. She had seen her father clean the lamps, and had been with him up the ladder, holding his strong hand; and she knew too where the match was kept, for she had been shown everything about the place while she was there on those long days alone with her father till the other man came on duty in the evening. So up she went, softly singing a hymn to herself, and after steadying herself by one of the iron rods that supported the lantern, put the lighted match to the wick, and was so startled to see the great yellow glare that shone from the reflector that she nearly lost her balance. When she reached the bottom of the ladder she found her friend looking at her quite wide awake; but he could do nothing to help her, except by telling her how to manage the light, and also how to move up there in the great glass lantern of the lighthouse, so that she might reach each lamp in turn.

When her father came up the steep stair, followed by a dozen of his comrades, she gave a cry of delight and was in his arms in a

moment; and she was soon made such a pet of by the men there that they all wanted her to accept knives, and rings, and pocket combs, and even tobacco-boxes, because they had nothing else to offer her; but she had her father and that was quite enough for her, and as he held her to his breast she could feel his tears fall upon her head, and yet he was as brave as any man who lived upon that coast.

"However could she do it?" said Bunny, who had earnestly listened to this story.

"She forgot all about herself, Bunny, and thought only of other people and of the duty that was straight before her," said Frank gently.

Bunny remained very serious all the rest of the evening; perhaps the story of the child lighting the lamps reminded her of the trick she had played poor old Ashton when she poured water into his wine-glasses.

But as we have seen already, Bunny was improving, and her mama was indeed delighted to notice the change, and quite shared her sorrow that they were so soon to leave for London.

A day or two before they had begun to pack up Mr. Dashwood brought the children glorious news. Frank Collins was to go to London and stay with them till the arrival of his mother, who was on her voyage home and would be in England in a few days. Then he was to go to school, and perhaps Mervyn would some day be sent to the same school, but of course in a lower class.

This last part of it was not very cheering for poor Bunny, and she was ready to cry; but she looked at Miss Kerr's kind gentle face and saw the look of joy in Mervyn's eyes, and so she choked back her tears, and presently when Mervyn said softly, "Of course I can't help being glad, Bunny, but I shall never be anything but sorry to be parted from you;" she was ready to say, "And I shall be awfully sorry, Mervyn dear, but then when the holidays come we shall both know so much more, and—and—"

Here poor Bunny broke down and hid her face in her pinafore. But the next day she had recovered her spirits, and she and Mervyn were talking over their future plans, for it would be some months before her

cousin would know enough to enter even the lowest form. But one chief reason for their rapid recovery of spirits was that it would be a whole month or more before Frank himself could begin his studies, and there were promises of visits to the Zoological Gardens, the great Palm House at Kew, the old Tower of London, and other places which would remind them of the stories they had heard, and of the books which they had yet to learn to read.

They had all these things to talk about when they found themselves in the train that was to carry them home, and were so full of plans and expectations that they were many miles upon the journey before they remembered that they had not waved a good-bye to their old friend Oliver's Mount, or thought of the sorrow of leaving Scarborough for smoky, noisy, old London.

THE END.

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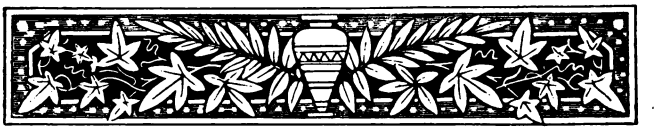

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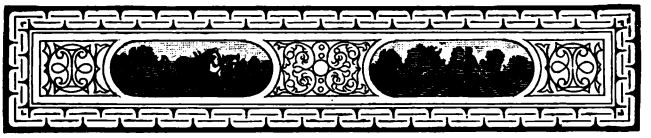

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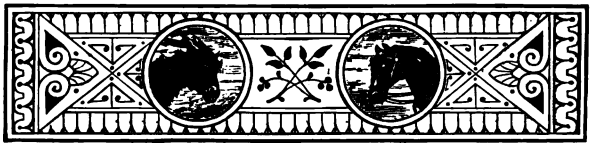

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